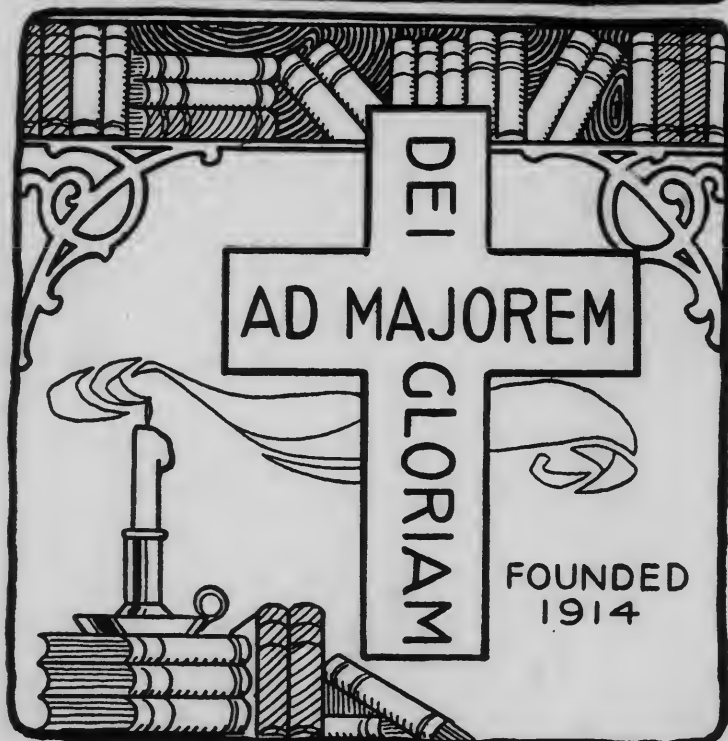


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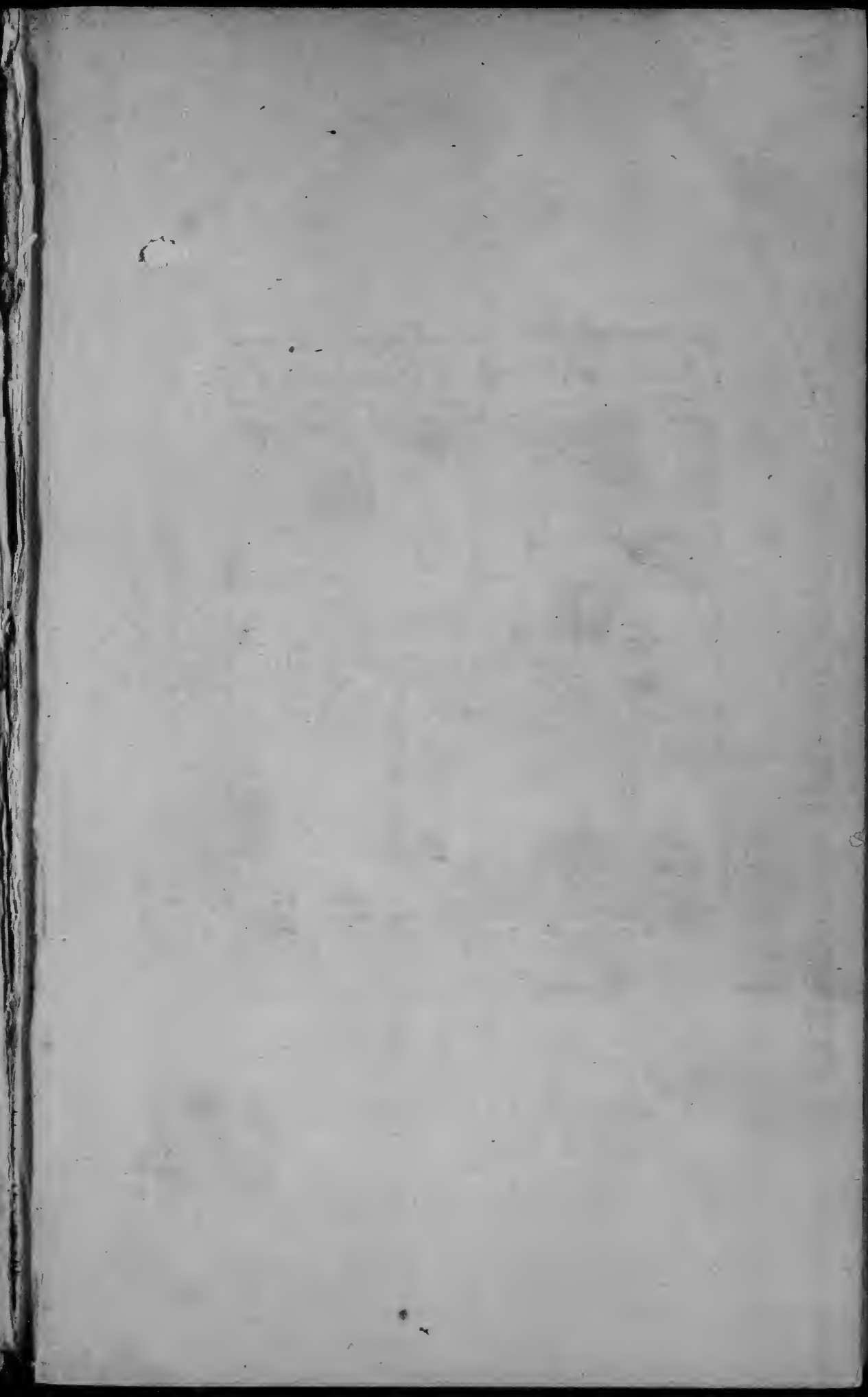
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Wesleyan Methodism

IN

MANCHESTER

AND

ITS VICINITY.



BY JAMES EVERETT.

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these
forty years in the wilderness."

MOSES.

VOL. I.

all published



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1827.



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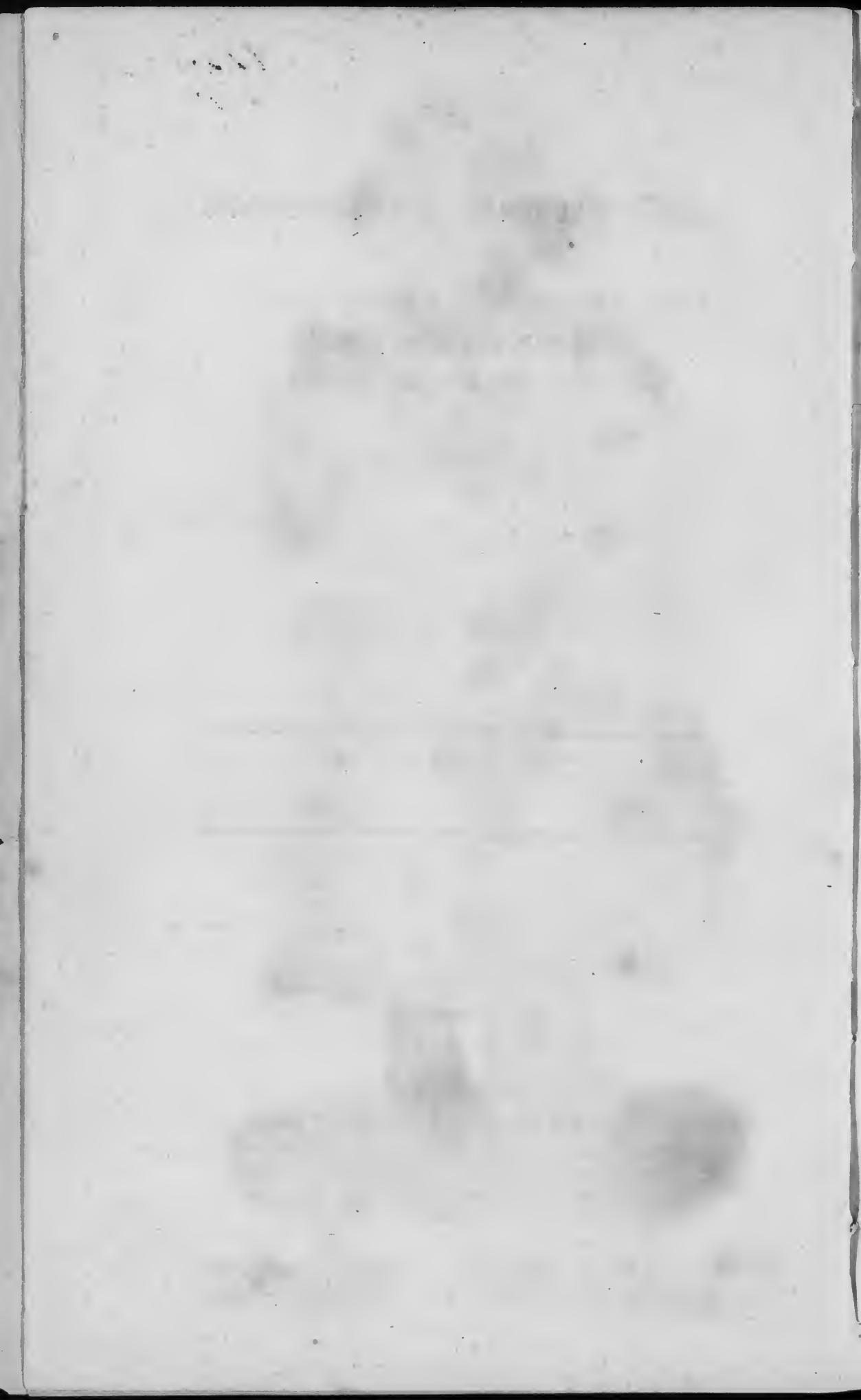
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1827.



TO
THE REVEREND ADAM CLARKE,

L. L. D. F. A. S. M. R. I. A. &c. &c.

AUTHOR OF A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON

THE SACRED WRITINGS

OF

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT,

&c. &c.

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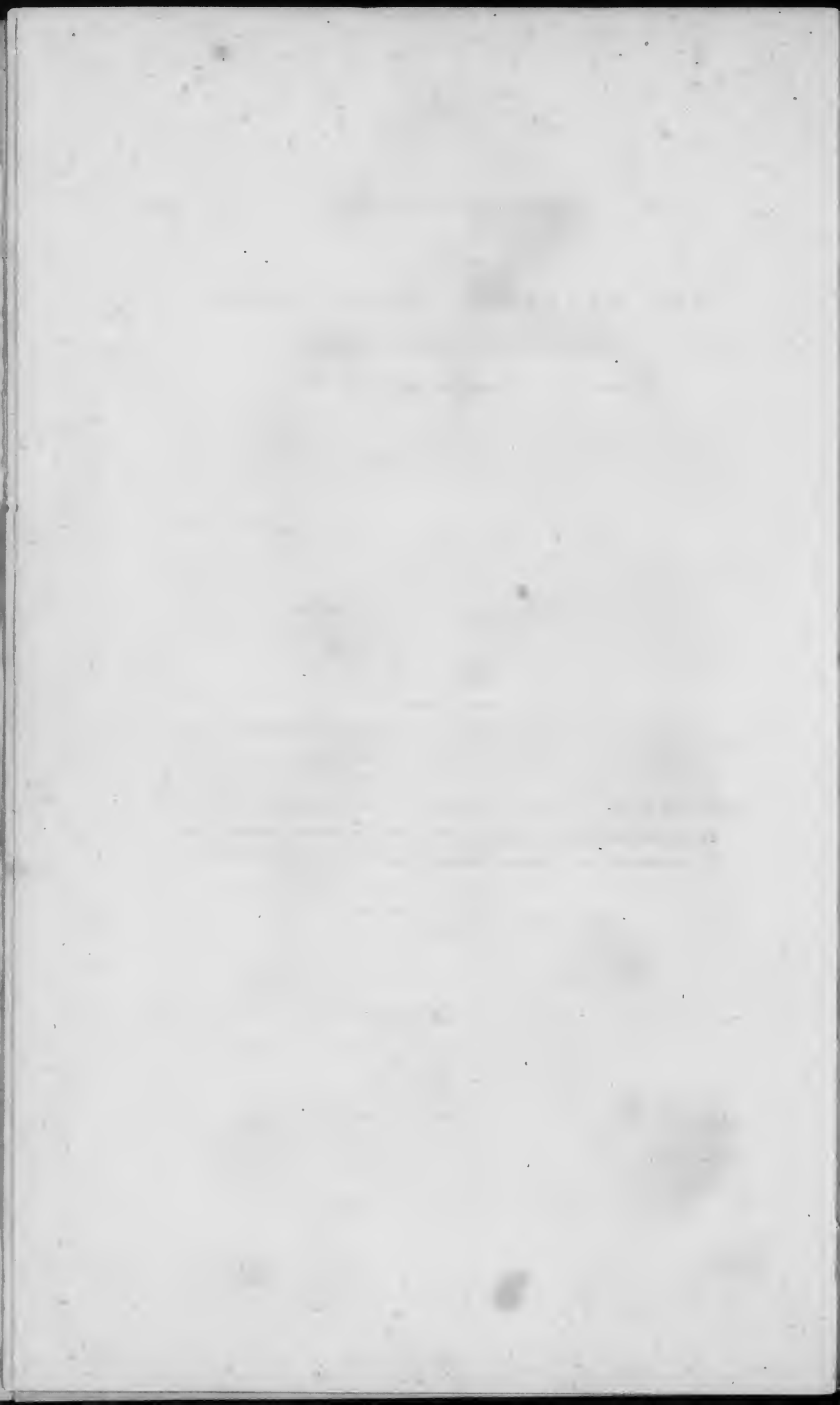
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IT ATTEMPTS TO POURTRAY, WILL AWAKEN SOME PLEASING RE-
MINISCENCES, WHEN CONTEMPLATED IN CONNEXION WITH
HIS OWN MINISTERIAL EXERTIONS, (HE HAVING
ITINERATED ON THE GROUND BOTH IN THE
PRIME OF LIFE AND IN MELLOW AGE;)

THAT IT WILL NOT BE FOUND OF AN UNCONGENIAL CHARACTER WITH
HIS OWN NARRATIVE OF THE WESLEY FAMILY;

AND THAT HE WILL ACCEPT IT AS A MEMORIAL OF SINCERE RESPECT
AND FRIENDSHIP.



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“Do not neglect the society of old men: their memories are furnished with many facts which they witnessed, and which make them repositories well worth examining. They resemble old books, that contain excellent matter, though badly bound, dusty and worm-eaten.” Such was the counsel of Ganganelli to a young monk; and the prediction of the author of the following pages, in favour of the ancients of the house of Israel, long before Ganganelli’s Letters were read by him, was such as to render, in his own case, this counsel unnecessary.

It has long been the opinion of the author,—that there has rarely been a work of God, since the apostolic age, more worthy an *Ecclesiastical History*, than that which has been exhibited in the christian world, under the denomination of METHODISM,—and that a general history can only be formed from such *local details* as are here presented, and which similar publications profess to furnish.

An ardent wish was not unfrequently indulged, while prosecuting the “*Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield, and its Vicinity*,” that the subject of local histories might be taken up in other parts of the kingdom—though, at that time, without the most distant hope it would ever engage the same pen. It so happened, however, that during the progress of the second volume of that work through the press, a variety of concurring circumstances led the writer to fix his residence in Manchester. This, exclusive of other considerations, in which another hand besides his own was conspicuous, appeared to be an additional link in the chain of those providences which contributed to the furtherance of his original design. Had his removal taken place at an earlier period, his collections for the Sheffield department would have been rendered incomplete; and had he been a few months later, he would have been deprived of the privilege of an interview with some *living oracles*, who, as in the case of some of the venerable worthies consulted in reference to his “*Sketches*,” went the way of all flesh soon after they were visited; among whom may be noticed John

Shore, of Ardwick, who died in the 83d. year of his age, and another person in the neighbourhood of New Mills, Derbyshire, who reached a 105, admirably pairing with old George Wainwright, who was born in the same county, and only exceeded him two years.

The "Historical Sketches" being the *first work* of the kind in Methodism, the hazard of a failure became of course the greater, from the circumstance of the writer having the whole of the interest to create, relative to such a subject. It was not long before he was indulged with the satisfaction of seeing the path which he had struck out, entered by others; and he trusts that the spirit which has been awakened, will never be permitted to slumber, till every circumstance and document, worth preserving, illustrative of the providence and grace of God, shall have been recovered. Had such a plan been adopted in the early ages of the christian church, it would have opened a new source of profit and of pleasure to all succeeding generations; and it is to such omission, that much of the meagreness of early Ecclesiastical History, is to be attributed. This remark, the reader will view as perfectly distinct from any reference to the manner in which the writer has executed his plan. Of that, others must decide.

Mr. George Whitfield perceiving the necessity of something of the kind, "Had formed a design," says Cornelius Winter, in his personal biography to Mr. Jay, "of writing the history of Methodism, but never entered upon it." Mr. Wesley proceeded still further, for he incorporated an account of the rise and progress of Methodism, into his Ecclesiastical History: but that account, in addition to its extreme brevity, does not profess to furnish any materials for history for some considerable time before his death; while much that has transpired since the period of its publication, remains untold.

The publications to which the predecessor of the present work has given rise, and to which allusion has been made, are all useful—whatever their magnitude or their merit, inasmuch as they are calculated to promote the grand object, and to preserve alive the spirit of research; the least of them bearing the proportion, and sustaining the importance of those drops which go to augment the size and increase the impetuosity of the stream. The Preachers, impressed with the importance of the subject, entered upon the Minutes of the first Conference after the publication of the "Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield, and its Vicinity" an "order" for the accomplishment of the general design; the order stating, that "Every Superintendent is di-

rected to collect all the information which it may be in his power to obtain, respecting the introduction of Methodism into the principal places in his circuit; which information he shall bring with him to the next Conference, to be disposed of as shall then be determined." This was in 1823, and upon this, several of the brethren acted. To give efficacy to the "order" of Conference, the Rev. Thomas Jackson, Editor of the "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," not only admitted reviews of separate local histories, but gave, in 1825, a prominence to the subject, which it had not attained, and which, for want of collections and time for arrangement, it could not possibly receive before. Hence, on viewing the labours of the year, in the preface, he had occasion to remark, "The papers on the rise and progress of Methodism in different parts of the United Kingdom, to which we have given publicity in the present Volume, constitute, in our apprehension, not only a *new* but also a very interesting feature in this work. Such accounts will preserve to posterity the names of many of the early Methodists who were distinguished by their active zeal in the cause of Christ, and by the patient endurance of persecution for his sake; and will also form a record of several interpositions of Providence, in behalf of suffering individuals, and for the furtherance of divine truth and grace."

The first separate publication that appeared after the author's "Historical Sketches" was, "A Sketch of Methodism in Halifax and its Vicinity, from its commencement in the year 1741 to 1824," with a quaint but significant motto, "*Better late than never*, by W. Hatton." This was succeeded by "A Concise History of the First Establishment of Wesleyan Methodism in the City of Norwich, in the year 1754, with its progress from that period to its State" in 1825. The year following, 1826, beheld "A History of Methodism in the Town and Neighbourhood of Great Yarmouth, including Biographical Sketches of some of the Leading Characters who" had "been among the Methodists in that Place." For the author to have been able to look out from his comparative retirement, and to observe the progress of research and achievement, from the first day that he put his pen to paper, to the last collection made by others, has more than compensated him for his share of the toil, and was such an expression of approval—however indirect, as he could not have anticipated in so short a period.

A peculiarity of view has led to the indulgence of those things which others have deprecated as evils, and have therefore avoided. The writer of one of the aforesaid local histories "Soon found it necessary, in order to keep both the size and price of the book within narrow limits,

to suppress many things, and to relate others as concisely as possible." It is the opinion on the other hand, of the author of these pages, that to "suppress" any thing of *importance* would be an injury both to the present generation; and to generations yet to come; and that should the things be *unimportant*, no apology is necessary, since their insertion rather than their omission, would require the pen of the apologist. A local history being chiefly intended for the neighbourhood in which the scene is laid, every thing in *that* neighbourhood becomes interesting, which is worthy of notice, and therefore ought—as both time and place demand, to be registered. These pages having been contemplated and written with a view to aid the general historian,—should such an one be held in reserve by providence, particular attention has been paid to general usefulness, as well as local gratification. It is the office of the general historian more especially to *suppress*, and of the local historian to *preserve*,—denying neither of them the right of selection—and proceeding on the supposition that the "things" in question demand attention, which alone can form the basis of apology. That which is not *now* preserved,—providence perhaps furnishing the last opportunity of securing its stores and benefitting by them, may be lost for ever. In several instances, the author has been some months too late in his applications, the fire having been previously applied to letters and other documents, which the "order" of Conference, promptly acted upon by persons in the neighbourhood, might have preserved. Not any particulars have been suppressed in the present instance, which have been deemed worthy of being recorded, and that for this reason,—because they were believed to be so. Others may differ from the author; and these are at liberty to reject what they please; but it is because of such insertion, that the power of rejection is conferred, which, while it is humiliating to the one, ought to remind the other from whence the privilege is derived.

Another of the writers in question has "Conscientiously avoided inserting any thing on mere hear-say." In this instance too, it has been the misfortune of the present author to be obliged from age, as well as inclination, to listen to the "hear-say" tales of "olden times." He has ever considered published accounts the common property of the public, and has only resorted to them for the sake of connexion and illustration; while his great solicitude has been, to secure well authenticated traditional information, in order to place it in a permanent form. Had he, however, shut his *ears*, and only attended to that of which he was an *eye*-witness, he would, by confining himself to the narrow circle of his own personal observation, not only have moved onward

like an oyster in its shell, but would have deprived his readers of some of the most interesting portions of his pages. Though it is one of those cases in which "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom," it is still not one in which those who "Are but of yesterday, and know nothing," are prohibited from recording what the negligence of riper years has omitted to transcribe. The term "hear-say" is so equivocal, that it is difficult to understand what is meant by it. There is a sense in which the best authenticated facts are only "hear-say" to the million, as well as the most important traditional knowledge, the truth of which being capable only of being established by the few: and the very facts recorded by the historian, who may have himself been an eye-witness, become but "hear-say" tales when related to a fourth or fifth person; and will not, in every instance, be credited by the hearer, though delivered on the testimony of the writer. If, on the contrary, "hear-say" relations refer to such circumstances or events as are not founded in fact, and with which it must be taken for granted the *historian* has nothing to do, the very act of anticipating and obviating such unpreferred allegation, is unnecessary, and more befitting the novelist than the grave historian. The author, therefore, threw open both ears, and gratefully listened to every old gentleman and every old lady that crossed his path, and availed himself of all the information which he could obtain both from his equals in age and those who lived before he was born, confident that many of them were as much the eye and ear-witnesses of what was orally delivered, as the historian might have been of what he transmitted from his own eye to the sheet of paper before him. But still, though age and distance reduced him to the necessity of listening to others, and of occasionally recording what had been penned and published, he received nothing without examination, and wrote nothing without a conviction of its truth.

In addition to the venerable oral chroniclers just noticed, the author has to acknowledge the obligations under which he has been laid, by communications from the Rev. John Collins, of Frodsham,—Dr. Townley, of London,—the Rev. Charles Ratcliffe, of Haworth,—the Rev. John M'Owan, of Oldham,—the Rev. Robert Miller, of Darlington,—Mr. John Stonehouse, of Manchester,—Mr. Abel Wilson, of Stockport,—Mr. Hitchen, of Alpraham,—Mr. T. Bowers, of Chester,—Mrs. Tindale, of Derby,—and several others, who have furnished letters and other hitherto unpublished documents,—all of which have essentially aided the work. Though brevity compels him to pass over

the names of many from whom favours have been received, a deep sense of the obligation is not the less felt.

"Methodism in Manchester &c." it may be remarked, connects with "Methodism in Sheffield, and its Vicinity," the one taking up the subject, nearly in the centre of Derbyshire, where the other leaves off, and both passing over a track of country, in a direct line from east to west, extending from Epworth in Lincolnshire to Liverpool in Lancashire, embracing, in its width, from north to south, a distance of from fifty to sixty miles. Six additional hands, occupying the same extent of territory, will go a great way towards accomplishing the "order" of Conference, and of completing that which is so desirable to all, and so difficult in execution—till tried. But those who would enter upon the work, will find it necessary to abandon what, in composition, may be deemed, both by themselves and others, loftier pursuits, and, in the language of Spencer, to Shepherds a little more elevated than genuine and extended usefulness would warrant, to

"COME DOWN and *learn* the little what
That Thomalin can *sain*."

Exclusive of the utility of local history, as a basis on which to raise a superstructure of a more general nature, and of the reasons assigned in the preparatory remarks to the "Sketches," there are other advantages peculiar to such a work as the present. The observations of a masterly writer, on the feelings and operations of the mind in the contemplation of other things, will not be altogether irrelevant here. "When from the summit of some lofty mountain, we survey the wide extended landscape; though highly delighted, we feel ourselves bewildered and overwhelmed by the profusion and diversity of beauties which nature spreads around us. But when we enter the detail of nature: when we attend the footsteps of a friend through some favoured, beautiful spot, which the eye and the mind take in at once; feeling ourselves at ease, with undivided, undistracted attention we contemplate the whole, we examine and arrange the parts; the imagination is indeed less expanded, but the heart is more gratified; our pleasure is less violent and tumultuous, but it is more intense, more complete, and continues much longer; what is lost in respect of sublimity, is gained in perspicuity, force, and duration." The same writer proceeds, on individual biography, "It is highly gratifying to find ourselves in the midst of a public assembly of agreeable people of both sexes, and to partake of the general cheerfulness of benevolence. But what are the cheerfulness and benevolence of a public assembly, compared to the

endearments of friendship, and the meltings of love? To enjoy these, we must retire from the crowd, and have recourse to the individual. In like manner, whatever satisfaction and improvement may be derived from general histories of mankind, which we would not be thought by any means to depreciate; yet the history of particular persons, if executed with fidelity and skill, while it exercises the judgment less severely, so it fixes down the attention more closely, and makes its way more directly and more forcibly to the heart." The reader will experience no difficulty in applying the leading particulars in these quotations to the subject in hand, and may possibly find that compensation in minute detail—which minutiae the character of the work absolutely requires, for that want of the majesty of history, of which all such works must necessarily—from their very plan, be deprived.

The author would conclude these remarks, in the language of the sprightly Thomas Fuller, who was as little disposed to suffer his readers to sleep, as to nod himself. "Next to religion," says he, treating on the study of history, "there is nothing that accomplisheth a man more than learning: and if you are afraid to hurt your tender hands with thorny school-questions, there is no danger in meddling with history, which is a velvet study, and a work of recreation. What a pity it is to see a gentleman to have such a crick in his neck, that he cannot look backwards! Yet no better is he who cannot see behind him the actions which long since were performed. History maketh a young man to be old, without either wrinkles or grey hairs; privileging him with the experience of age, without either its infirmities or inconveniences. It not only maketh things past to be present, but it enableth one to make a rational conjecture concerning things to come. For this world affordeth no new accidents, but in the same sense in which we speak of a new moon: which is the old one in another shape, and no other than that which hath been formerly. Old actions return again, furbished over with some new and different circumstances."

JAMES EVERETT.

Manchester, July 4th, 1827,

CHAPTER I.

General remarks on the state of Religion—An itinerant ministry—Manchester the scene of Missionary labours—The Rev. J. Wesley, his acquaintance with the Rev. J. Clayton—The origin of Methodism—Mr. Clayton's removal from Oxford—Mr. Wesley visits Mr. Clayton at Manchester—An attack on horse races—Mr. John Byrom—Dr. Burton—Mr. Wesley goes to Georgia, returns to England, and again visits Manchester—The first Methodist Society in Manchester—The Rev. George Whitfield's visit to the town.

AT the period assigned for the commencement of the present work, Christianity was much more clearly defined in the *letter* than comprehended in the *spirit*, and might not unaptly—to a certain extent at least, be assimilated to a body without a soul. This was especially the case in England, and is admitted by writers both in the Establishment and among the Dissenters. The ministerial character was more distinguished for its learning than for its simplicity and fervid zeal; and this destitution of two of the essential components of general usefulness, occasioned by a want of experimental religion, left the ministers themselves in the attitude of a priest officiating at an altar without a fire. Dreadfully afraid of every thing which assumed a puritanical aspect, from a knowledge of its odiousness to the higher powers, the sermons of many of the clergy became little else than polished harangues on moral virtue, and were more frequently illustrated by quotations from the sages of Greece and of Rome, than by numerous and pertinent references to the only correct standard of faith and practice. Though man was beheld and instructed by his fellow man, as a subject of the moral governor of the universe, and of the civil polity of his country, yet religious duties were explained and enforced in such a way as to leave the brute heart of the lower orders untouched, and to resolve the devotions of the higher classes of society into a system of imperfect and frigid morality. While the episcopalian, by a partial concealment of the great necessity of an atonement, together with the fatal malady of sin, and the impotency of man in consequence

of that sin, introduced a kind of intermediate scheme, under the supposition that religious services—however imperfect—however blended with occasional frailties,—frailties, inseparable from human nature, would eventually interest the divine clemency and secure the divine favour, the descendants of the old presbyterians beheld religion in the light of a diminutive satellite to the world of moral and eternal interests, and useful only for the purpose of throwing a few rays upon that part of it on which the solar light of human reason never shone—thus reducing the whole of the doctrines of the gospel to a scheme scarcely distinguishable from a system of ethics. In the one case, good works—though a misnomer by the way, were introduced as auxiliaries in the work of reconciliation, and in the other, the offence of the cross had entirely ceased. But notwithstanding this general declension in religion, there were a number of able defenders of the Protestant faith against the errors of the Church of Rome, and of Christianity against the avowed and covert attacks of Infidelity; on both of which accounts, their writings—particularly those of the clergy, are justly held in high estimation. Had the same minute attention been paid to the internal as to the external evidences of Christianity, and the same ardour been evinced in their enforcement and spread, Britain; ere this, had been as the garden of the Lord. But alas, it never seemed to enter into the calculations of many of them, that while human eloquence and human learning might be laudably and energetically employed in defending the outworks of Christianity, the full sway of simplicity and truth could alone defend the citadel. From such lamentable defects in the christian ministry, but slender improvement could be expected in public morals. The heart must be assailed, in order to effect any thing characteristic of purity in the life. The woodman, who enters the forest with a view to fell the timber, never thinks of amusing himself with the uppermost twigs; he aims a blow at the root; and by thus interrupting the sources of circulation, at once deprives it of vegetable life and lays it prostrate.

Such was the general state of the church, the ministry, and public morals when the Wesleys and Whitfield arose to bless mankind. Afflicted with a spirit of apathy within, and profanity without, extraordinary exertions were absolutely necessary to restore to the Establishment the character of a Reformed Church: and Mr. Southey, in his life of Mr. Wesley, does not concede too much to the subject of his memoir, when he affirms, "That he awakened a spirit of

religion, not only in his own community, but in a church which needed something to rouse it." To effect this in every instance, a stated ministry is not unfrequently found inefficient: an itinerant ministry is very often summoned into existence in the order of providence, to fulfil its purposes. Nothing short of ardent zeal, originating in deep piety of heart, will effect many of those erratic movements exemplified in the lives of christian teachers; and that which gives birth to the plan, blesses it in its operation. The Apostles were commissioned to disciple all nations—their immediate successors were distinguished for their outgoings—and missionaries in every age, as their name and their office import, have evinced the same spirit and pursued the same line of conduct.

As some particular cities and districts are distinguished above others, owing to their antiquity, their scenery, or their alliance with the arts and sciences, and attract the gaze as well as receive the imprint of the traveller's foot, so there are some particular places more distinctly marked as the scenes of Missionary labours than others. Whatever may be advanced on this head, in reference to the Mancunium of the ancients, the Manchester of the moderns has not remained unvisited by those birds of passage—the Missionaries, in their migrations from place to place. The venerable Bernard Gilpin, the Apostle of the North, not satisfied with preserving his own plot of ground in a state of high cultivation, felt, in the spirit of a true missionary, an ardent desire to send the ploughshare through the wastes, and for the express purpose of ploughing, and sowing, and reaping, made an annual tour through the counties of Northumberland, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire.* The celebrated George Fox, to whom the Society of Friends owe their religious existence, was in the strictest sense a Missionary; and in one part of his Journal notices his having been "among the professors of Duckenfield and Manchester:"† and Manchester is recorded as one of the most early places in which the ministerial voices of Messrs. Wesley and Whitfield were raised, before they commenced their more public career.

But long anterior to Methodism acquiring any fixity of character, and even prior to Mr Wesley's appearing in Manchester, it had been quietly introduced into the town under the unsuspecting garb of a regular clergyman; and

* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 373, 415; and Middleton's Evangelical Biography, Vol. 2, p. 202.

† Journal, folio edition of 1765, p. 11, 12.

its calm introduction was the more singular, because it was the garb in which it made its appearance in Oxford, and because of the prominency it assumed by means of the very gentleman by whom it was imported. The *first* person upon whom the *name* can be legitimately fastened, is the Rev. JOHN CLAYTON, of Brazen-nose-college, afterwards successively Chaplain and Fellow of the Old Church, in Manchester. Various attempts have been made, both in the College Library and elsewhere, to obtain something in the shape of a memoir of this worthy man, but every effort has proved fruitless; and the notices of his early history are scattered and brief, as they appear on the pages of Mr. Wesley—and yet, though brief—so much in his favour, that they come over us like gleams of sunshine.

He was born in the year 1709, and became acquainted with Mr. Wesley in the spring of 1732*. The latter, in a letter to the father of Mr. Morgan, observes, “Your son was now at Holt; however, we continued to meet at our usual times, though our little affairs went on but heavily without him. But at our return from Lincolnshire, in September last, we had the pleasure of seeing him again, when, though he could not be so active with us as formerly, yet we were exceeding glad to spend what time we could in talking and reading with him. It was a little before this time my brother and I were at London, when going into a bookseller’s shop (Mr. Rivington’s in St. Paul’s Churchyard) after some other conversation, he asked us whether we lived in town? and upon our answering, ‘No, at Oxford.’ ‘Then gentlemen,’ said he, ‘let me earnestly recommend to your acquaintance a friend that I have there, Mr. Clayton of Brazen-nose.’ Of this, having small leisure for contracting new acquaintance, we took no notice for the present. But in the spring following (April 20) Mr. Clayton meeting me in the street, and giving Mr. Rivington’s service, I desired his company to my room, and then commenced our acquaintance. At the first opportunity I acquainted him with our whole design, which he immediately and heartily closed with: and not long after, Mr. M. having then left Oxford, we fixed two evenings in a week to meet on, partly to talk upon that subject, and partly to read something in practical divinity. The two points, whereunto by the blessing of God, and your son’s help, we had before attained, we endeavoured to hold fast: I mean, the doing what good

* Wesley’s Works, Vol. 1. p. 134. 8vo. edit.

we can, and in order thereto communicating as often as we have opportunity.”*

No sooner had Mr. Clayton united himself to the infant society in Oxford, than it felt the benefit of his influence, for “two or three of his pupils” † followed his example, which is highly complimentary of the devotional spirit with which he endeavoured to imbue their minds: and his counsel seems to have been as much respected as his conduct had been influential. Mr. Wesley, in the letter referred to, observes, “To these”—that is, to the “two points” already gained, “by the advice of Mr. Clayton, we have added a third, the observing the fasts of the church; the general neglect of which we can by no means apprehend to be a lawful excuse for neglecting them. And in the resolution to adhere to these, and all things else which we are convinced God requires at our hands, we trust we shall persevere, till he calls us to give an account of our stewardship. As for the names of Methodists, Supererogation-men, and so on, with which some of our neighbours are pleased to compliment us, we do not conceive ourselves to be under any obligation to regard them, much less to take them for arguments. To the law and to the testimony we appeal, whereby we ought to be judged.” The man who could give such advice as that proposed by Mr. Clayton, could be no ordinary character in the work of self-denial; and the esteem in which his judgment was held by Mr. Wesley, will be abundantly attested in the ensuing pages.

The Society, at the time Mr. Clayton joined it, was composed of only thirteen or fourteen members,‡ and had carried about with it, for the space of four years, the collegian’s imaginary brand of religious infamy.|| How long

* Wesley’s Works, 12mo. edit. vol. 26, p. 100.

† Ibid. 8vo. edit. vol. 1, p. 106.

‡ Wesley’s Works. vol. 1, p. 106, 8vo. edit.

|| The name of *Methodist* is of ancient date. Themison was the founder of a sect of the name, about thirty or forty years before the Christian Era; and it flourished, according to ALPINUS, about three hundred years. LE CLERC, informs us, that the Physicians of this sect were called *Methodists*, because they took it into their heads, to find out a more easy *method* of teaching and practicing the art of Physic. However this may be, it is certain that some of the greatest Physicians of the time in which the sect flourished, were *Methodists*. That Themison was a man of the most extensive practice, is evidently implied in the words of JUVENAL, if he speaks of the same person, which is generally supposed. He is describing the infirmities of an old man, and observes,

Circumsilit agmine facto
Morborum omne genus, quorum si nomina quæras
Promptius expediam

Quot Themison ægros autumnis occiderit uno.

“A whole troop of all kinds of diseases rush upon him on all sides; if you ask their names, I could as soon reckon up how many patients Themison killed in one autumn.”—Had his practice, however, been very unsuccessful, it is not probable it would have become so extensive as to become almost proverbial.

he continued a member is not certain, but probably not much more than twelve or fourteen months, as we find him removed to Manchester in the summer of 1733. From these gleanings, it should seem, that the very *first* METHODIST in MANCHESTER was among the *first* members in OXFORD, where he distinguished himself above several of his compeers, in forming the plans and adding to the numbers of the Society,—and that the very first Methodist in Manchester, was a FELLOW of the OLD COLLEGIATE CHURCH. The *name*, not having gone forth against the members of the society, Mr. Clayton of course appeared, not with the title, though with the views, the feelings, and the habits of the persons with whom he had just been associated, and from whom he was separated more as a matter of necessity than of choice. Such a beginning, to say the least, is honourable.

Though Mr. Clayton, on becoming resident in Manchester, was not remarkable for any of those peculiarities which distinguished the Wesleys from others of the clerical order, and though he carefully avoided any intimacy or unnecessary associations with the followers of Mr. Wesley, on their assuming a distinctness of character—confining his attention and labours to the people of his immediate charge, yet his former connexion and continued intimacy with the Oxonians, had a remote influence on what afterwards became the Methodism of the public, and facilitated not only its introduction but its spread in the town and neighbourhood. Mr. Wesley was familiarized to the friends of Mr. Clayton, by his visits to Manchester, and was known to his auditories in general, by preaching in his pulpit; and Mr. Clayton had too high a regard for Mr. Wesley to permit him to be evil spoken of in his presence, and too much religion himself to disturb the religion of his admirers. If there were not direct aids, therefore, there was at least the influence of restraint and respect, and the potent example of

The name of *Methodist* was again employed in 1657, during the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, by a person called JOHN SPENCER, who was librarian of Sion College, and who published a book, consisting of extracts from various authors, in which he speaks of the eloquence and elegance of the Sacred Scriptures, and inquires, "Where are now our Anabaptists, and *plain pack-staff* Methodists, who esteem all flowers of rhetoric in sermons, no better than stinking weeds?" Though we have no particular account of the tenets of the persons referred to, it is certain that a peculiar description of religionists were denominated *Methodists*, during the period specified, and that they were distinguished for great plainness of speech.

GALE, in his fourth part of the "Court of the Gentiles," notices also a religious sect, whom he styles, "*The New Methodists.*"

And DR. CALAMY, in one of his volumes of the Ejected Ministers, remarks that they called those who stood up for God, "*Methodists.*" The coincidence in these latter cases is the more remarkable, as it was in the time of Mr. Wesley's grandfather—JOHN WESLEY.

It is not improbable, that the Fellow of Merton College, who gave the Oxonian Pietists the name of Methodists, had been aided in his work, by the revival of the epithet in times not much more than half a century from his own.

personal friendship with the Methodistical head—his house being the grand resort of the Oxford Methodists, whenever they visited the town.

Mr. Clayton had not been long in his new situation, before Mr. Wesley tendered his personal respects to him; "For in May (1733), he set out for Epworth, and took Manchester in his way to see him. From thence he proceeded to Epworth, and returned to Manchester on Saturday the 2d of June. The next day he preached three times, once at the Old Church, again in Salford, and at St. Anne's."* With these two visits, so closely connected with each other, the circumstances in which Mr. Wesley was placed must be associated. The health of his father had been for some time in a declining state, and it was in contemplation to procure the living of Epworth for him, in case of his father's demise. This was a subject which required serious thought, and on which he could neither resolve at once nor without the advice of his friends. He saw the advantage which the family might derive from the enjoyment of the living, and the service of which he might be to the parishioners; but he saw too, the superior advantages which Oxford afforded for personal improvement, and the probability of extensive usefulness among his pupils at the seat of learning, by medicating the streams of knowledge at the spring-head. As he was, therefore, on the most intimate terms of friendship with Mr. Clayton—as Mr. Clayton, though an absentee, might still be considered as a member of the Society—and as mutual converse possesses many advantages over epistolary correspondence, there was coupled with this visit, not only personal regard, but christian counsel; and the meeting itself, at that early period, was stamped with all the sanctity and importance of a *band-meeting* among the more modern members of the Methodist Society. Though there was nothing brilliant in the mental endowments of Mr. Clayton, there was a great deal of chaste, sober, correct thought, united with sterling integrity; and these, in the judgment of Mr. Wesley, were of more essential service in christian communion, than either genius or splendid attainments.

Whatever might be the advantages derived from this visit, on the ground of christian fellowship, and the determination to which he arrived in reference to the living of Epworth, Mr. Wesley had to deplore its consequences in

* Wesley's Works, Vol. 1, p. 130: Moore's Life of Mr. Wesley, Vol. 1, p. 204.

other respects. In a letter to his father, dated June the 13th, he says, "The effects of my last journey, I believe, will make me more cautious for staying any time from Oxford for the future. One of my young gentlemen told me at my return, that he was more and more afraid of singularity; another, that he had read an excellent piece of Mr. Locke's, which had convinced him of the mischief of regarding authority. Both of them agreed, that the observing Wednesday as a fast was an unnecessary singularity; the Catholic church, (that is, the majority of it) having long since repealed, by contrary custom, the injunction she formerly gave concerning it. A third, who could not yield to this argument, has been convinced by a fever, and Dr. Frewin. Our seven and twenty communicants at St. Mary's, were on Monday shrunk to five; and the day before, the last of Mr. Clayton's pupils, who continued with us, informed me, that he did not design to meet us any more. My ill success, as they call it, seems to be what has frightened every one away from a falling house."* It may be proper to remark, that Mr. Wesley lost no time in his attempts to recover the ground which his pupils had sacrificed.

Mr. John Byrom had ere this come into possession of the family estate at Kersal, on the death of his brother Edward,† and had settled in Manchester. Between him and Mr. Wesley, a strong intimacy subsisted; and from that intimacy, repeated interviews during the late visits may be fairly inferred. A tract against horse-racing was published in the course of the year, and attributed to Mr. Byrom.‡ The races on Kersal-Moor had only been established three years, and great profligacy attended them. This roused the zeal of the more religious part of the community, and Mr. Byrom had the credit of leading the way in offensive operations. The precise *month* of publication cannot now be ascertained; but as the pamphlet was intended as an antidote to the amusement of the turf, the probability is in favour of its issuing from the press prior to the race-week; and as Mr. Wesley was in Manchester just about the time, it is not to say what influence his advice had in the subject, or how far, on the presumption that Messrs. Wesley, Clayton, and Byrom met, they mutually strengthened each other's hands in attempts of general usefulness.

* Works, Vol. I. p. 205, 8vo. edit.

† Life prefixed to Nichols's edit. of his Poems, Vol. I. p. 20.

‡ Aikin's History of Manchester.

Though the friendship subsisting between Mr. Wesley and his two Manchester friends, had doubtless been preserved in all its warmth, by repeated communications, yet there is no evidence that he visited the town again till 1735, when another important occurrence happened connected with his personal history. His father died in April of this year, and the Living of Epworth was given away in May; so that he now considered himself as established at Oxford, without any risk of being further disturbed in his calm retreat. But an unexpected scene of action was soon proposed to him, of which he had not before entertained the most remote conception. The Trustees of the new colony of Georgia were greatly in want of proper persons to send thither, to preach the gospel, not to the colony, but to the Indians. They directed their attention to Mr. John Wesley, and some of his friends, as the most suitable characters, chiefly on account of the regularity of their lives, their abstemious habits, and their prompt and patient endurance of hardships. Being in London, August 28th, he met with his friend Dr. Burton, for whom he had a high esteem; and the next day was introduced to Mr. Oglethorpe, where the subject was proposed to him, and strongly urged by such arguments as they deemed most likely to dispose his mind to accept the proposal. It does not appear he gave any positive answer, but rather waived it with a view to consult his friends. Accordingly, he wrote to his brother Samuel, visited Mr. Law, and in three or four days, set out for Manchester, to commune with Mr. Clayton and Mr. Byrom, and several others whose judgments he respected. While with his friends in these quarters, he received a letter from Dr. Burton, directed to Manchester, and franked by Mr. Oglethorpe, of which the following is a copy.

“Sept. 8th, 1735, C. C. C. Oxon.

Dear Sir,

I had it in commission to wait upon you at Oxford, whither by this time I imagined you might be arrived. Your short conference with Mr. Oglethorpe, has raised the hopes of many good persons, that you and yours would join in an undertaking, which cannot be better executed than by such instruments. I have thought again of the matter, and upon the result of the whole, cannot help again recommending the undertaking to your choice: and the more so, since in our enquiries, there appears such an unfitness in the generality of people. The state of ease, luxury, levity, and inadvertency, observable in most of the plausible

and popular Doctors, are disqualifications in a Christian teacher, and would lead us to look for a different set of people. The more men are inured to contempt of ornaments and conveniences of life, to serious thoughts and bodily austerities, the fitter they are for a state which more properly represents our Christian pilgrimage. And if upon consideration of the matter, you think yourselves (as you must do, at least amidst such a scarcity of proper persons) the fit instruments for so good a work, you will be ready to embrace this opportunity of doing good; which is not in vain offered to you. Be pleased to write a line signifying your thoughts to me, or Mr. Oglethorpe; and if by advice I can be assisting to you, you may command my best, best services.

Yours affectionately,

JOHN BURTON."

"P. S.—Mr. Horn telling me he heard you were at Manchester, I presume you are with Mr. Clayton, deliberating about this affair."

From hence Mr. Wesley proceeded to Epworth, in order to lay the case before his mother, and his eldest sister, both of whom acquiesced in his acceptance of the proposal. He is represented by his biographers as hesitating previous to his visit to Manchester;* and as there are now no documents, either printed or written, to show how far the judgment of Messrs. Clayton, Byrom, and "several others," influenced him in his decisions, the probability is, that as he confided in their judgment—entered their society undetermined—and proceeded to Epworth without any intimation of hesitancy, they supported him with arguments in favour of the proposition. Thus MANCHESTER—in a portion of its natives and residents, may assert its claim for a quota of the honour of directing one of the greatest benefactors of mankind in two of the most important circumstances of his life—circumstances which actually gave rise to the benefits conferred—in giving advice, which prevented a man born for the world, from confining himself to a small country parish, and which led the way to his career of glory in Missionary enterprize—a work in which he lived and expired, and for which thousands will hail him as the blessed of the Lord in eternity.

Agreeable to the dictates of his own mind, and the advice of his friends, Mr. Wesley, in the month of October,

* Works, Vol. 1. p. 168. Moore's Life, Vol. 1, p. 234.

set out as a Missionary for Georgia in America, where he remained for the space of about two years and four months.* He landed in England, on his return, February 1st, and such were his attachments in Manchester, that the very month after his arrival, he was seen in the streets and heard in its christian assemblies. The circumstances of the journey are traced with great minuteness by Mr. Wesley, and treated with an air of pleasantry by Mr. Southey.†

Mr. Wesley observes, "Tuesday (March 14), I set out for Manchester, with Mr. Kinchin, Fellow of Corpus Christi, and Mr. Fox, late a prisoner in the city prison." After noticing the characters with whom they mingled, the treatment they experienced, and the conversations in which they engaged, he proceeds: "Being faint in the evening, I called at Altringham, and there lit upon a Quaker, well skilled in, and therefore, as I soon found, sufficiently fond of controversy. After an hour spent therein, perhaps not in vain, I advised him, 'To dispute as little as possible, but rather follow after holiness, and walk humbly with his God.'

"Late at night we reached Manchester. Friday 17th, we spent entirely with Mr. Clayton, by whom, and the rest of our friends here, we were much refreshed and strengthened. Mr. Hoole, the Rector of St. Anne's Church, being taken ill the next day, on Sunday 19th, Mr. Kinchin and I officiated at Salford Chapel in the morning, by which mean Mr. Clayton was at liberty to perform the service at St. Anne's: and in the afternoon, I preached there on these words of St. Paul, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.'"[‡]

There are two forms of expression connected with Manchester, with which it is impossible, in the composition of a work like the present, not to be impressed. Mr. Wesley is represented by his biographers, as visiting Manchester in 1735, not only for the purpose of consulting Messrs. Clayton and Byrom, but "*several others*," whose judgments he respected. The "*several others*" alluded to are, in all probability, the persons who are characterized by Mr. Wesley, in the present instance, as "*the rest of our friends here*." They are *associated* with Mr. Clayton, and receive the appellation of *friends*;—the friendship suggested is *mutual*, for they are *our friends*;—and that friendship is established on the base of *christian communion*, as they enter into fellowship with each

* Works, 12mo. edit. vol. 26, p. 106, 238.

† Life of Wesley, vol. 1, p. 156.

‡ Works, vol. 1, p. 203.

other, and are "*refreshed and strengthened*" by this means. From hence, it is not unreasonable to infer that the solitary slip taken from the Oxford stem, had struck its roots in Manchester, or, in other words, that Mr. Clayton possessed the same devotional feeling in Manchester, which he evinced when a member of the Methodist Society, in Oxford—that his labours in the christian ministry had not been in vain—and that, among those who profited by the word, there were some who dared to be singular—who dared to associate together in a more private way, for the purpose of refreshing each other's minds, and strengthening each other's hands. Here was a Christian SOCIETY, both in its spirit and in its practice—a society which appears to have derived its origin from the *Methodist* Society in Oxford, and therefore, properly estimated, one of its branches—a society every way Methodistical, as far as Methodism, in its genius and in its forms, had then an existence, for it had not at this period been proscribed, but was entirely confined in its operation within the pale of the Establishment—and a society, which, when presented to the font for the baptism of the Spirit, might look through Mr. Clayton to the Wesleys for its parentage. But as there had been no collegiate wit in the neighbourhood to christen it, and Mr. Clayton was not likely to adopt that which had been given in derision by others, it escaped for the present the opprobrious epithet; so that, though Methodists existed in *reality* in the town, the name of *Methodist* had not obtained among the inhabitants. Thus, like a company of Jews, who, according to the testimonies of Du-Halde and Grosier in their histories, settled in one of the central districts in China, and were only known to the Chinese by the peculiarities of their religion, the Methodist Society in Manchester seems only to have been known by the more rigid adherence of its members to the duties of Christianity.

After spending three days in the town, Mr. Wesley remarks, "Early in the morning (Monday) we left Manchester, taking with us Mr. Kinchin's brother, for whom we came; to be entered at Oxford. We were determined to lose no opportunity of awakening, instructing, or exhorting, any whom we might meet with in our journey. At Knutsford, where we first stopped, all we spoke to thankfully received the word of exhortation. But at Talk-on-the-Hill, where we dined, she with whom we were, was so much of a gentlewoman, that for near an hour our labour seemed to be in vain. However we spoke on. Upon a sudden, she looked as one just awaked out of sleep. Every

word sunk into her heart. Nor have I seen so entire a change both in the eyes, face, and manner of speaking, of any one in so short a time.”*

Whatever public attention Mr. Wesley might have attracted by his former visits, he could not fail securing a fair proportion on the present occasion. He had preached *extempore*, and in the *open air*, as early as 1735.† But he was now distinguished above many of his fellows, as a Missionary who had forsaken the comforts of home, in order to convert the Georgian Indians: and as the year rolled on, it continued to unfold events the most important in their consequences to himself and to others. It was in the course of the year, and soon after his visit to Manchester, that he obtained saving faith:‡ added to which, he ventured, in his addresses to God with others, to employ extempore prayer—admitted the assistance of a Lay-Preacher—and drew up the Rules of the Band Societies.”§ With the first of these, his public usefulness stands connected: and it is almost impossible to contemplate such a character as Mr. Wesley, without perceiving his adaptation to the work for which he was destined by divine providence. There are few enlightened minds but will admit, that there existed—with great profaneness, an ample stock of pharisaism in the land, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and especially in the Church with which Mr. Wesley was connected. And where could a fitter instrument be found for the purpose of ousting the pharasaic tribes out of their fastnesses, than a man who had thought, and felt, and acted with the most refined part of them—a man who knew all their subterfuges from having been the subject of them—a man who was taken for a christian of the first order by himself, and by all—except his God, prior to the period of his conversion!

Towards the close of the year, Manchester was visited by another of those luminaries ordained to move in a brilliant track. Dr. Gillies observes of Mr. Whitfield, who was then only in the 24th year of his age, that “After a passage of twenty-four hours from Dublin, he arrived at Park-gate, Thursday, November 30th, preached twice on the Lord’s day at Manchester, and came to London the Friday following, December 8th.”|| Whitfield united himself to the Methodist Society in Oxford, in 1735; and although it was

* Works, vol. 1. p. 263.

‡ Myles’s History, p. 7.

† Works, vol. 1. p. 260—359.

§ Myles’s Hist. p. 9, 10. || Whitfield’s Life, p. 31.

subsequent to Mr. Clayton's removal from thence, it is not difficult to divine in whose pulpit he officiated, or at whose house he was entertained, during his stay in the town. They must have been known to each other by report, if not by direct correspondence; and such was the spirit of brotherhood manifested by the members of the Society at this time, that they seemed like a number of lucid streams, in sweet and gentle confluence, flowing into each other's views, wills, and affections.

CHAPTER II.

The Progress of Methodism—Mr. Wesley's fitness for the Work—Mr. Clayton's apparent declension—The Rev. Wm. Grimshaw, of Howarth—Mr. John Bennet's usefulness, and union with the Methodists—The introduction of Methodism into Todmorden, Chinley, Bongs, Chelmorton, Alpraham, Hopkin-Pit, and Woodley—Mr. Richard Cawley—John Nelson, his acquaintance with John Bennet, a providential deliverance in his favour, and his reception at Manchester—John Nelson's second visit into Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire, and his treatment at Monyash—The conduct and death of a clergyman—The further extent of the work of God—An additional visit from John Nelson, together with his rencounters with some Dissenters.

SOME years elapsed between Mr. Wesley's visit in 1738, and his re-entry into Manchester or the neighbourhood. Considerable progress had been made in the interim, in the work in which he was engaged; and wherever it spread, the *title* which its subjects received at the UNIVERSITY, followed in its wake—"A new set of Methodists is sprung up." The connection which Mr. Wesley had formed with the Moravians was now dissolved—most of the churches were closed against him, in his official capacity,—private houses, fields, and public streets, were resorted to for the purpose of proclaiming the word of life—a society was formed in London—a preaching-house erected in Bristol—the Foundry opened—Kingswood School established—Stewards elected—Lay-Preachers multiplied—the Society divided into classes—a Hymn Book published—and a theological war proclaimed by Mr. Whitfield against the Arminianism of Methodism. In the midst of all this, no account of Manchester or its vicinity is to be found.

If Mr. Wesley required counsel, in reference to the Living of Epworth and his mission to Georgia, it certainly became more necessary at a crisis, when a mighty mass of concatenated circumstances and events were pressing him into a track as foreign to his own designs, views, and feelings, as

such results had remained unanticipated by his most intimate friends. Still, no Mr. Clayton—no Mr. Byrom is sought; there are no Manchester “friends” to *advise, refresh, and strengthen!* The only probable solution of the subject is, that so much had passed between Mr. Clayton and Mr. Wesley, in an epistolary way, as to convince the one that the other was not altogether friendly to proceedings so hostile to the spirit and manners of the religious public; and in this, they were partly agreed: but Mr. Wesley had gone too far to recede;—circumstances impelled him forward;—Mr. Clayton was a considerable remove from them, and comparatively in the calm of retirement;—and yet, had Mr. Clayton been in the midst of the work, there is reason to believe—and his active conduct as a member of the Society at Oxford will support the position, he would have been among the last to give the signal for its abandonment. However, the want of his hearty concurrence, may account chiefly for Mr. Wesley’s long absence, and also the partial attempts of others upon Manchester, till Methodism had made considerable progress in less apparently favourable districts. Hence the paucity of materials, for furnishing any thing like a connected narrative, in the more early stages of Methodistical operations in these quarters.

Though the work was the very same in its essence, for which Mr. Clayton had been *Methodized* in Oxford, and was followed up by the divinely selected instruments of its birth, the external modifications which it had received, and to which circumstances had given rise, rendered it less palatable to a person, not only fettered down by certain formularies, but really partial to clerical order, from disposition and habit. Yet he was never known to oppose Mr. Wesley, but always entertained the highest opinion of his motives, his talents, and his Christian character. The utmost, perhaps, to which he would even dare to proceed, would be, “*He followeth not with us;*” but a variety of facts go to prove, that—“*Forbid him not,*” would, at the same moment be lingering on the lip, and waiting for seasonable utterance.

Whether any of the persons brought into church fellowship by the exertions of Mr. Clayton, united themselves to those who afterwards received Methodism under its later modifications, through the agency of Mr. Wesley’s lay-preachers, is doubtful: a certain preparatory feeling, however, might possibly be induced, for their reception, as the younger branches of the same family, though the birth-right, with all its appendages and superiority of privilege might be

claimed by Mr. Clayton's adherents as their own, as the first born of Methodism in the place.

The earliest notice of Mr. Wesley's followers, and their nearest approximation to Manchester, in the county of Lancashire, after circumstances had compelled him in some degree to stand apart from the Establishment, is a case in the vicinity of Todmorden, in 1741 or 2. One of the biographers of the Rev. W. Grimshaw, of Haworth, observes, that "James Scholefield, who lived at Calflee, (two or three miles from Todmorden) was a very strict churchman. His wife had heard a *Methodist* Sermon, and was convinced she was a sinner: she was deeply distressed about her soul. Her husband told Mr. Grimshaw, and desired him to come and speak to her. This he did, and endeavoured to comfort her, by telling her 'To put away those gloomy thoughts; to go into merry company; to take her diversion in life; and that all should be well with her at last.' However, she did not take his advice, but continued crying to the Lord, who, shortly after, spoke peace to her soul; and by her conduct and conversation, her husband was convinced of sin, and found mercy through the blood of the Lamb. Soon after Mr. Grimshaw had experienced the pardoning love of God, at Haworth, he came to James Scholefield's house, and exclaimed to his wife as follows:—'Oh! Mary, what a blind leader of the blind was I when I came to take off thy burden, by exhorting thee to live in pleasure, and to follow the vain amusements of the world: but God has in mercy pardoned and blessed us all three, blessed be his GREAT NAME.'"*

The stream of knowledge in this notice is a little turbid in its descent, arising, probably, from certain circumstances rendering it impracticable for the author to obtain a nearer approach to the fountain-head. This is not intended as a reflection: nor can it be at all disreputable to any traveller, who has toiled to trace a river to its source, to have a successor who has pushed his researches some leagues further up the country than himself; for had it not been for the indelible impression of the foot upon the sand, as a guide to his steps, not only in the outset but on his route, his own journeyings had probably never proceeded beyond the point—if even so far, at which the other was compelled to pause. The name of the female referred to above, was Susan, not Mary Scholefield; and it was under Mr. Grimshaw's own ministry, and not that of a Methodist Preacher, that she was impressed. The circumstance which led to it probably never

* Myles's Life of Grimshaw p. 2, 3.

came to the knowledge of Mr. Myles. The poor woman had overlaid her child, in consequence of which, she was greatly distressed. In her agony, she fled to the House of God, where a concern for salvation originated. She applied for pastoral advice to Mr. Grimshaw, who accosted her with, "I cannot tell what to say to you, Susan, for I am in the same state myself; but to despair of the mercy of God, would be worse than all."

It is not improbable, that the transfer from Mr. Grimshaw to a Methodist Preacher had been occasioned by the circumstance of the Methodists having found their way about this time into the neighbourhood. John Bennet, a native of Derbyshire, who had been brought to God under the ministry of David Taylor, had extended his ministerial labours into different parts of Derbyshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire, previous to his union with Mr. Wesley; and the union took place in 1743.* What was emphatically called "John Bennet's round," embraced the greater part of these three counties, with the borders of those adjacent to them.

On the Derbyshire side of Manchester,—Bongs, in the parish of Mellor,—Chinley, near Chapel-in-le-Frith,—and Banmoor, in Peak Forest, could all boast of an alliance with Methodism before this period.† Nor must Chelmorton be omitted, not only because of its priority, but because of its subsequent connexion with the Manchester Circuit, and its furnishing the Manchester Society with the Marsden family—the father of the Rev. George Marsden, and three uncles, having all been among the first-fruits of John Bennet's ministry,‡ and convinced of sin under the same discourse.

In Cheshire, John Bennet appears to have been rather singularly favoured, by having the way prepared for his reception. This was unintentionally occasioned by a female pioneer, who resided at Alpraham, which is about twelve miles from Chester, and thirty from Manchester. The young person referred to, was religiously disposed, and met with considerable opposition from her friends, who were of a less devotional character than herself. She was enabled, however, to persevere in her christian course, through the encouragement which she received from a Baptist family of the name of Cawley. But not being disposed to have persecution quartered on her for life, she removed to London, in order to reside with some of her relatives. Her friendship with

* See Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield and its vicinity, vol. I, p. 8, 23—27, 40, 257, for a more ample account of his conversion and ministry:

† *ibid.* p. 19.

‡ *ibid.* p. 26—7.

the Cawley family was preserved alive by correspondence; and having frequently heard Messrs. Wesley and Whitfield preach out of doors—it being just about the period when field-preaching commenced, and it was the topic of public and private conversation in the metropolis, her letters were generally richly fraught with paragraphs in their favour. These letters excited considerable interest in the bosoms of old Mr. and Mrs. Cawley, who were lovers of good men, and a still deeper interest in the breast of their son Richard, who had then arrived at a state of manhood. The latter in particular, felt an anxious solicitude to see and to hear the men whose fame was thus emblazoned in such glowing terms. The subject matter of the letters was known to others; and a small society of young men was actually formed, for the purpose of reading and explaining the scriptures, and assisting each other in devotional exercises. These young persons, with Mr. Richard Cawley at their head, met regularly in the vestry of Bunbury Church; and for the purpose of aiding them the more effectually in their pious designs, one of the prebends of Chester made them a present of Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament. This boon, however, was to be enjoyed by them only so long as they continued to meet in the vestry and attend the service of the Establishment; nor could such condition, with the prebend's probable knowledge of the connexion of some of them with other denominations, be received as matter of surprize: and its propriety will be justified by the issue. When John Bennet, John Nelson, and others, made their appearance in the neighbourhood, and were known to be connected with Mr. Wesley—the man of whom so much had been written, and read, and heard, they were cordially received. Mr. Richard Cawley invited them to his father's house—a society was formed—the vestry association was broken up—and Burkitt's Notes, like many other venerable folios hung in chains in our cathedrals, at a time when books were more scarce and depredations might be more frequent, were to be seen chained in a conspicuous part of Bunbury church, where they remained for years—and may possibly yet be beheld, as a monument, not only of the existence, but of the dissolution of the reading society in the vestry.

Richard Cawley was a man of correct conduct, and of a superior mind. Such was the esteem in which he was held by his father, that the old gentleman almost implicitly bowed to his will in all things; and hence his readiness to accede to his wishes, in suffering the Methodist Preachers—though a baptist in principle and practice, to preach in his

house. As Richard advanced in life, he rose in religious respectability. He was beheld with reverential awe by rich and poor, by young and old, by saint and sinner. The clergyman, who was not an enlightened man, very often made rude attempts at a more evangelical strain in his sermons, with a view to his individual gratification, and would endeavour afterwards to elicit his opinion of their merits. Untoward boys were not unfrequently paid by him, with presents of money, and other valuables, in order to allow him to teach them to read. With such an opening, and supported by such influence, the preachers must have considered the divine seal as having been affixed to their call to the place.—Preaching was afterwards removed to the house of Mr. Sims, probably because of its being better calculated to accommodate a large congregation: but for some time prior to the period assigned for the conversion of Messrs. Sims and Hitchens,* both Mr. Wesley and his Preachers had preached in the house of old Mr. Cawley, at the instance of his son.

It was to Alraham, very likely, and other places in Cheshire, Lancashire, and Derbyshire, that John Bennet intended to conduct John Nelson, on their first acquaintance at Leeds, which took place a considerable time *before* the latter was impressed for a soldier, and from which he was released so early as the summer of 1744.† To relate the circumstances of their interview, and of the journey, in other language, or in any other way than that in which John Nelson himself has bodied them forth, would be to detract from the general interest: and the man who can read his Journal through, without shedding the sympathetic tear, or improving in his christian character, is neither to be envied in his feelings nor his state of mind. John Nelson wrote just as those children speak, who are taught by nature rather than at school: he is simple, touching, and sprightly; there is no design—no effort—yet great effect.

“Some time after we had begun at Leeds,” says he, “Mr. John Bennet, from Chinley in Derbyshire, came to our town, and sent for me to an inn: I did not know him, but by his dress I took him to be a Preacher. I said, ‘I do not know you: pray what is your name?’ He told me. I asked him if he came from Mr. Wesley: he said, ‘No: I am not in connexion with him; I am in fellowship with the Moravian brethren: but I had a great opinion of Mr. Wesley for some time, till I saw a little pamphlet which he lately

* Meth. Mag. 1825, p. 722.

† Journal p. 170.

published, which he styles, *The character of a Methodist*, and it has turned my mind.' I asked, 'Sir, what do you find wrong there?' He replied, 'There is too much perfection in it for me.' I answered, 'Then you think a less degree of holiness will fit you for heaven, than what is mentioned there: pray what are the words you stumble at?' On his telling me, I said, 'They are the words of St. John.' But he said, 'We know by experience that there is no such thing to be attained in this life.' I replied, 'If your experience do not answer to what St. Paul and St. John speak, I shall not regard it;' and when I mentioned some passages of Scripture, he did not believe that what I said was Scripture. I pulled out my bible, and shewed him the words; and when he had read them, his countenance changed, and he cavilled no more.

"When we met again, we seemed to be of one heart and judgment: for God revealed his will to him soon after he had parted with me, and made him an instrument to turn many to righteousness, and to bring me and my brethren to preach in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire.

"The first time I went, he met me at Marsden, to conduct me into Cheshire; but as I went over a great common, a little behind Huddersfield, a dog leaped out of the heath, and came and smelled at my leg, and walked by my side for near a mile: he then went to the houses that were a little out of the way, and bit several dogs, and came running after me again, and walked by my side till he saw another house, where he fought with a dog; then followed me again. Thus he went on for about five miles, and went with me into the inn at Marsden, when he sat down by my side. There were several men in the house, when I asked, if any of them knew whose dog that was; but none of them could tell. I said, I think he is mad; but they laughed me to scorn. Soon after, another dog came in, and he went and bit him directly, and ran out, and bit four more, and then the men pursued and killed him. When I saw that God had kept me in such imminent danger, I was greatly humbled before him.

"As Mr. Bennet and I went over to Stanedge, we met David Taylor,* who had got so much into the poor sinner-ship, that he would scarcely speak to me; he called Mr. Bennet to a distance, and said, he was sorry that he was going to take me into Derbyshire, for I was so full of law and reason, that I should do a great deal of hurt wherever I went.

"I preached twice that afternoon, once at Hopkin-pit,

* See Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Meth. in Sheffield, &c. for a full account of D. Taylor, vol. 1. p. 1-64.

in Lancashire, and the other time at Woodley, in Cheshire. It was given out, unknown to me, for me to preach at Manchester-cross on the Sunday in the afternoon. About ten people went with me from Mr. Lackwood's* to Manchester. When we arrived there, I do not know but there might be two thousand people gathered together at the cross; and most of them behaved well. But when I was in the middle of my discourse, one at the outside of the congregation threw a stone, which cut me on the head: however, that made the people give greater attention, especially when they saw the blood run down my face, so that all was quiet till I had done, and was singing a hymn. Then the constable and his deputy came and seized me and Mr. Bennet, and said, 'You must go before the justice.' I asked, 'By what order?' He held up his staff, saying that was his warrant, and he would make me go. I answered, 'I will not resist; for if I have done any thing contrary to the law, I ought to suffer by the law.' He said, I should suffer for what I had done; then he began to strike the people that crowded about us. As soon as he and his deputy could get through the multitude, they outran us: When I called and said, 'Stay, gentlemen, for we cannot get through the people as fast as you.' But the people crowded about us in such a manner, that we saw the constable no more. Afterwards we rode to Jonathan Holmes's. That night we had a blessed meeting; and the Lord was much with us all the time I stayed in those places."†

This is the *first* sermon, from a *lay-preacher*, of which there is any account, connected with Methodism in the town of Manchester; and in the treatment which John Nelson received, Mr. Clayton,‡ who could not be ignorant of passing events, especially in the place of his residence, would be enabled to form an estimate of some of the evils and inconveniences he escaped, by ceasing to push on in the track with Mr. Wesley, in which Methodism was leading the way—and evils too, which others were enduring from their advocacy of the very cause which he himself had espoused, strengthened, and laboured to perpetuate in Oxford. It is possible, that John Bennet might have made an attempt to introduce lay-preaching into Manchester before this period, but very improbable; and the improbability of the circum-

* The name is retained as it occurs in J. Nelson's Journal, though it is suspected that it ought to be spelt Lockwood.
+ Journal p. 73—78.

‡ Mr. Wesley notices another clergyman of the name of Clayton about this time, and one with whom he was on the most intimate terms; but it was the Revd—Clayton of Wensley, who officiated in Wensley-dale, and died full of piety and years in 1746. See works, vol. 26, p. 190, 226, 373.

stance is founded on the simple relation of the preceding fact. Had the people been familiarized with preaching, as at Bongs, Chinley, Chelmorton, and other places, to have proceeded to Manchester would have been a matter of course. Hopkin-pit, and Woodley, are both noticed in a manner, that impresses the reader with the notion of their having been places at which preaching had been established. But Manchester was matter of surprize to John Nelson; to preach there—not barely at the cross—but in the town itself, was “*unknown*” to him—a circumstance which had never been contemplated. John Bennet had laboured round the outskirts; but knowing probably Mr. Clayton’s former connexion with the Methodists, and his relinquishment of the system in its more matured form,—and anticipating at the same time, great opposition from the immoral part of the inhabitants, while calls from minor places furnished him with full employment, the town was left for the conquest of a spirit of still more noble daring than his own—for the entrance of a man who knew no fear, except the fear of his God, and who was actually in Methodism, what NELSON was acknowledged to be on the face of the deep. It was a formal, and what under the circumstances of the case might be considered, a formidable entrance. In addition to John Bennet, “About *ten* people went with” him “from Mr. Lackwood’s.” This was no uncommon case in the infancy of Methodism; nor during any part of its progress; the writer of these pages himself—though comparatively of yesterday, has, when visiting a place in which a Methodist ministry has not been exercised, and in which no society has been formed, been accompanied by several friends from a neighbouring town, in order to assist in the singing department, both in the cottage and in the open air.—If a single friend had been gained to Methodism in Manchester, previous to this—unconnected with the serious part of Mr. Clayton’s auditory, the name of that friend would certainly have been noticed, either as affording them countenance, shelter, or refreshment; nor can we account for such omission, under all the singular and painful peculiarities of the case, but in the non-existence of such a character. They appear to have entered the town without a friend, among its numerous inhabitants—to have put up their horses at an inn—proceeded straight to the cross—remounted—left the place as friendless as they entered—and rode on to Jonathan Holmes’s for the quiet and enjoyment denied them elsewhere.

As the two preachers had left Woodley for Manchester,

at the first of which places they seem to have been entertained at the house of Mr. Lackwood, the place at which Jonathan Holmes resided must have been distinct from it, and, from the mode of expression adopted, must have been accustomed to something like regular preaching; for there, says John Nelson, "We had a blessed *meeting*; and the Lord was much with us all the time I stayed in those places." Woodley is a small country place, about three miles east of Stockport, and may be looked up to with filial affection by the Stockport Society as its parent.

After spending some time in these parts, John Nelson returned to Birstal, his native place, and from thence, at the request of Mr. Wesley, proceeded into Lincolnshire. On his return from the fens, he remarks, "I found God had opened the mouth of Jonathan Reeves, and blessed his word to numbers about Birstal; and we laboured together for some time, till I returned into Mr. Bennet's circuit."

On entering upon his journey, he proceeds: "I went into the Peak to preach at Monyash, when a clergyman, with a great company of men that worked in the lead-mines, all being in liquor, came in just as I began to give out the hymn. As soon as we began to sing, he began to halloo and shout, as if he were hunting with a pack of hounds, and so continued all the time we sang. When I began to pray, he attempted to overturn the chair that I stood on, but he could not, although he struck so violently with his foot, that he broke one of the arms of the chair quite off. When I began to preach, he called on his companions to pull me down; but they replied, 'No, Sir, the man says nothing but the truth: pray hold your peace, and let us hear what he has to say.' He then came to me himself, took me by the collar of the shirt, and pulled me down; then he tore down my coat cuffs, and attempted to tear it down the back; then took me by the collar and shook me. I said, 'Sir, you and I must shortly appear at the bar of God, to give an account of this night's work.' He replied, 'What! must you and I appear before God's bar together?' I said, 'As sure as we look one another in the face now.' He let go my throat, took my Bible out of my hand, and turning it over and over, said, 'It is a right Bible; and if you preach by the Spirit of God, let me hear you preach from this text;' which was, 'Wisdom strengtheneth the wise, more than ten mighty men in a city.' I got up and began to preach from this text, and when any offered to make a noise, the miners said, 'Hold your peace, or we

will make you, and let us hear what he will make of the parson's text.' As I went on, the parson said, 'That is right: That is true.' After a while he looked round, and saw many in tears; then he looked at me, and went away, leaving me to finish my discourse in peace. All the rest of the Circuit I had peaceable meetings; and the Lord kept still adding to the number of his children."*

The clergyman who disgraced his profession in his conduct on the present occasion, was pre-eminent for his hostility to Methodism; and not unfrequently interlarded his discourses with the severest vituperatives against those who had favoured it with a hearty reception. One of the uncles of the Rev. George Marsden, on leaving the Church on one occasion, after hearing an anti-Methodistical sermon, was accosted in a tone of triumph by a friend of the minister, with,—“He has done for you now.” The vaunt was received with meekness, and was replied to with solemnity: “If that man die the common death of men, I am much mistaken.” The catastrophe was terrible. After acting the part of a persecutor to a number of persons—persons as inoffensive as they were devout and useful, for no other assignable reason than that of differing from him in religious opinion; and after connecting with the sacred office the life of a dissolute sot, some years subsequent to this, when on one of his inebriating perambulations, he was led, through the darkness of the night, and his own want of self-control, to the brink of one of those tremendous tors for which the High Peak of Derbyshire is so much distinguished, where he was precipitated to the base, and must, from the nature of the fall, have instantly expired. His mangled remains, if report be correct—and the information was furnished to the writer by the grandson of John Nelson, who received it from the persons themselves, were first discovered by some poor men, members of the Methodist Society, when proceeding to their labour the next day. It is not the intention of the writer, either to pronounce the tragical event a signal judgment of heaven, or to exalt the character of Mr. Marsden into that of a prophet of God. Persons less tenacious of both prophecy and punishment, and who labour for their own sake, from a consciousness of deserving the lash, to get rid of a first cause, may accommodate both themselves and others, by affirming Mr. Marsden's remark to be within the reach of all, and such an exit to be the probable result of

* Journal p. 83.

such a life, in such a perilous district, from the hazards and hair-breadth escapes attendant on intemperance, and the frequent deaths which are presented to the eye in the rear: and such a comment is offered for the perusal of some religious characters, to whose visual rays the hand of God is less frequently seen than to others, and who can only hear his voice in the declarations of Patriarchs, Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles. The fact is simply stated; the interpretations given to it will vary with the religious light and feelings of the reader; but few will deny, that it contains a moral—and that the moral may be found in that antiquated expression, “The way of *duty* is the way of *safety*.”

With the exception of Monyash, John Nelson’s second tour through these parts, bears the stamp of peace and prosperity: the people were favoured with “peaceable meetings, and the Lord kept still adding to the number of his children;”—expressions, which, in this stage of the work, speak volumes for God, the agents, and the people; for as yet, there were only two preachers to be found, Messrs. Bennet and Nelson: and extraordinary must have been that general respect for character, which restrained the baser part of the populous from manifesting the natural enmity of the human heart to sacred subjects, from breaking through every barrier upon agents of such little promise, and from at once crushing a rising cause, which levelled its shafts at every species of self-indulgence. So much does John Nelson appear to have enjoyed this visit, and such were the prospects of increasing usefulness, that after returning to his family at Birstal, and labouring a short time at his regular calling as a mason, with a view perhaps, not only to support his family, but to recruit his exhausted funds, he made another tour; respecting which he observes,

“As I was passing through part of Lancashire, I found the Lord reviving his work among the people. After I had done preaching at one place, a man and his wife came to me, both in tears, and desired me to pray with them. I did so. When I had done, I was exhorting them to abstain from evil, and to continue in prayer, and told them, God would shew mercy unto them, for the obedience and blood-shedding of his Son. Presently a Dissenter broke out, and said, ‘You are deceiving the people, and setting them to lean upon a broken reed, by telling them that another man’s obedience and blood would atone for their sins.’ I asked him how he could stand before that God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, if there were no merit in the

blood of Christ, to atone for his sins? He said, 'Man hath such noble faculties, that if he improve them, he will thereby qualify himself for heaven; but you degrade man's nature in your preaching, and set him on a level with the brute beasts.' I said, 'Did I so?' He replied, 'Yes, you did; for I heard you myself.' I replied, 'Then, Sir, you heard me preach false doctrine: for if I set a natural man upon a level with the beasts, I set him greatly out of his place: I believe he is far worse; for he has not only all the faculties of the beast, which are lust and earthly-mindedness, but the nature of the devil,—wrath, pride, malice, and ambition; he is therefore three degrees worse than a beast, till he is created anew in Christ Jesus; so that if I ranked him with the beasts, I set him above his place.' Then he burst out into anger: but I said, 'Sir, make use of that reason you speak of, and let me see you save yourself from anger.' At which he was ready to strike me; and went away, leaving me, as he said, in my stupid condition.

"When I got about ten miles further into the country, another Dissenter came into the house, where I was at prayer with a poor man. When I had done, I exhorted him not to rest, till he was sure that the Lord Jesus had loved him, and washed him from his sins in his own blood. At which words the Dissenter spoke out, saying, 'I hate to hear people talking of being assured of any such thing, or of perfection in this world.' I replied, 'Is the Lord of Life able to do what he came from heaven to do?' He said, 'What is that?' I answered, 'To destroy the works of the devil, to make an end of sin, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.' He said, 'Shall you make me believe that any man can live without committing sin?' I answered, 'I cannot tell whether I can make you believe or not; but this I can tell you, by the authority of God's word, that if you are not saved from your sins here, you must be damned.' 'Well,' he said, 'I care not what you say, for no man can live without committing sin, one day.' I replied, 'By your talk, it is as necessary for a man to commit sin, as to eat; for you say, he cannot live without it. Now, doth it keep his body or soul alive? Or do you believe that all mankind are to live in sin, and die without perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and so be damned without hope or help?' He answered, 'No: God forbid.' Then I said, 'You must believe there is a purgatory, to cleanse the soul in after death. Sir, you and the devil speak one language; for he said to our mother Eve, 'Did God say, In the day ye eat thereof,

ye shall die? Ye shall not die;’ God saith, ‘The soul that sinneth, it shall die.’ But you say, ‘The souls of all must continue in sin, and they shall not die.’ He said, ‘You shock me; if things be as you say, what will become of the greatest part of mankind?’ I replied, Our Lord says, ‘What is that to thee, follow thou me?’ He said, ‘I cannot but acknowledge you have the Scripture on your side: but if you are right, we are sadly wrong. I never did hear one of you in my life; for our minister has warned us not to hear you; but I am determined to hear you this night.’ So he did, and thanked me kindly when I had done.”*

The principal opposition experienced during the two last visits—if indeed a part of it merit the name of opposition, arose from the professors of religion—ministers and people. As Manchester was important in its population, and had received the introductory discourse of a lay-ministry in rather an ungracious manner, it may be presumed, that, if it had been again visited, particularly as it was the same person who was concerned, some notice would have been taken of it, either in the way of shewing that hostilities were still maintained, or that the storm had subsided, and the sun of prosperity was beginning to skirt the horizon. This good man—JOHN NELSON, who lived for the benefit of others, “hewing stone” in his own language, “in the day time, and preaching every night,” while resident at Birstal—this good man was impressed for a soldier almost immediately on his return to Yorkshire—impressed at the instigation of inn-keepers and clergymen—and for no other reason or cause, than that of warning his fellow-creatures to flee from the wrath to come.

* Journal p. 108, 111.

CHAPTER III.

Spread of Methodism in Haworth and its neighbourhood—The Rev. Wm. Grimshaw—Mr. J. Williams, of Kidderminster—Messrs. J. Maskew, Paul Greenwood, and Wm. Darney—Mr. Grimshaw's increasing usefulness, and contemplated opposition to Wm. Darney—Societies raised up near Todmorden, at Bacup, Mill-End, Miller-Barn, and Gauksholm—John Maden, his conversion, and Sabbath-walks—Heap-Barn, in Rossendale, visited—Wm. Darney's character—Jonathan Maskew's bravery in the midst of Persecution—Scotch Rebellion, and the use made of it by enemies—John Morris—Mr. Wesley visits the vicinity of Manchester, an anecdote of him, his visit repeated—Quietism—Mr. Turner, of Bongs—Preachers impressed for soldiers—Richard Moss, his life, and ministry—A good work at Betley, near Nantwich.

On the abridgement of John Nelson's civil and religious liberty, which took place, May 4th, 1744,* the field of labour was chiefly left to John Bennet. Mr. Wesley, in passing and repassing, while on his northern and southern excursions, had halted previously to this at Sheffield, at Birstal, and even visited Halifax and its vicinity; but the set time for Manchester had not apparently arrived; Mr. Clayton, with but one exception, remained the undisturbed possessor of it, and exhibited Methodism in its softer mouldings, as received from the Oxonian mint. The fire, however, which had been kindled in the country, was breaking out like concealed flames in an immense assemblage of buildings, in unexpected quarters. Haworth, in Yorkshire, and Colne, in Lancashire, together with the surrounding villages and hamlets, were prepared for Methodism in its humbler and sterner forms, as associated with untutored genius—with lay and itinerant preaching, by the bold, pow-

* Wesley's Work, vol. 28, p. 227.

erful, and apostolic ministry of the Rev. Wm. Grimshaw, who, ere this, had been renovated in spirit and reformed in life.

Mr. Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster, whose interesting Diary had been long before the religious world, and with one of whose immediate descendants the writer has conversed, intimates in a letter to the Rev. Malachi Blake, of Blandford,* that Mr. Grimshaw had adopted part of the usages of the Methodists, before his personal acquaintance with them. His letter is dated March 5, 1747, and writing in the present tense, he observes, "He reckons at least, one hundred and twenty souls savingly renewed, whom he hath formed into little classes, after the manner of the Methodists; and it is amazing to me how much he hath drank into their spirit, though he never saw or conversed with any of them. Over each class presides one man who has the gift of prayer, which, he says, some of them have received lately, whose business is to converse, as well as pray with the others, and watch over them; and now and then he meets with these heads, who give him accounts of the individuals. Among them there are two, who I think, were both converted by his ministry, who being capable thereof, do with his approbation, exhort and expound the Scriptures in private houses, and people flock together to hear them; and more than once he told me, he thought as many had been converted by their ministrations as his own."

Though Mr. Williams thus writes in the present tense, yet what he penned was evidently copied from private memorandums which had been previously made, or was a reminiscence of what he had heard, of which Mr. Blake had received some intimation, and respecting which he was desirous of being more fully and perfectly informed. This is implied in the introductory sentence, which is, "The most material passages of what I learned from Mr. Grimshaw, touching his life, &c. is as follows." He then furnishes a biographical sketch of his subject, and carries it forward to the period of his correspondence with Mr. Blake. There is not, therefore, any thing which militates against an earlier acquaintance with the Methodists, than that of the date affixed to the letter. Or if Mr. Williams wished to suggest it as the period of their intimacy, he must have laboured under some misconception of Mr. Grimshaw's meaning, as to date, since there is reason to believe it took place in 1744, in the person

* Evangelical Mag. for Nov. 1794.

and through the exertions of William Darney. That Mr. Grimshaw had "drank into their spirit" *before* "he *conversed* with any of them," cannot be questioned, as both had received the baptism of the same Spirit from on high, which had operated upon each in a similar way; but still, though he might not have *seen* or *conversed* with any of them antecedent to his own more extended plans of usefulness, the general attention they were attracting might have reached his *ears*, and from what he heard, he might have been induced to adopt their usages. The "one hundred and twenty souls," whose conversion is noticed, comprehends a view of the work in its *progress*, and the *classes* as an *accompaniment*. It was the "gift of prayer" that had been "*lately*" received, and the appointment of "heads" or leaders that had but "*lately*" taken place; both of which might date for their origin the year 1747, while his acquaintance with the Methodists might institute a prior claim, though still subsequent to his conversion and ministerial usefulness.

The "two" persons alluded to, by Mr. Williams, as exhorters, were Messrs. Paul Greenwood, and Jonathan Maskew, both of whom were known in Rossendale, by the appellation of "Mr. Grimshaw's *men*."* The former of these, of whose early history the least is known, "Was a Christian," says Mr. Pawson, "of the primitive stamp; he was particularly remarkable for genuine simplicity, integrity, and spiritual-mindedness. His fervent zeal for the prosperity of the work of God, in the conversion of sinners, and building up of the saints in their most holy faith, appeared in all his actions; and his labours in the ministry were attended with the blessing of heaven, in every place where he preached. The sacred fire of divine love was kept continually burning in his own soul, so that he was always ready for every good work. He continually preached wherever he went, and had a word in season for every one that came in his way."† Of his birth, his parentage, and the manner of his conversion, time has left few memorials. The place of his nativity was accidentally obtained in the course of conversation, when the writer of the present work was on a visit to Haworth, having had the eye directed to the spot—consisting of two or three isolated houses, on the side of one of the wild hills, a short distance from Haworth, on the road to Colne, and led to increased information from the Rev. Charles Radcliffe, to whose taste for the antique, judgment, and persever-

* Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 17.

† Meth. Mag. 1795, p. 143.

ing research, as already acknowledged, the writer has been indebted for the Haworth department.

Jonathan Maskew, who appears to have been made of more athletic materials than Paul Greenwood, was born near Bingley, in Yorkshire, in the year 1713. It would appear from his confined education, that his parents were far from being opulent; and it is probable, it was with difficulty they supported the expence of his learning, in the little he acquired, which was not much more than reading and writing. Hence, whatever were his future acquisitions in letters and knowledge, it is to be ascribed more to his own industry, than to original instruction. He was the subject of early religious impressions, deep conviction, powerful temptation, and of a sound conversion to God.* He was connected with Mr. Grimshaw at the time Mr. Williams wrote to his friend; and the phraseology employed, would lead to the belief of both himself and his companion having been engaged in the work some length of time, for they are represented in the character of *established* exhorters of *continued* usefulness. For many years, Jonathan Maskew formed part of Mr. Grimshaw's family, enjoyed his friendship, and partook of his bounty. It is said he superintended his glebe, and united in himself the servant and companion.

While Mr. Grimshaw and his *men* were concentrating their energies for the welfare of the parishioners, Wm. Darney, a native of Scotland, who had been, what was equivalent to a *local* preacher, two years,† struck in with one of his wild notes, which—though at first like a discordant tone, was preparatory to the richest harmony. He was a man possessed of but few personal attractions—of a broad Scottish dialect—and, when dwelling on the terrors of the Lord, terrible to behold; but a man of deep piety, plain sense, and a burning zeal, with a courage that fearlessly defied all opposition. There was a rich vein of evangelical truth in his preaching, looking occasionally to the Calvinistic side of the question, and often delivered with the quaintness of some of the old Puritan Preachers, which pleased and profited many. Perhaps, too, his popularity was not diminished by his frequently, at the close of his sermon, giving out an extemporaneous hymn, adapted to the subject upon which he had been discoursing. The poetry of these extemporaneous effusions was not, indeed, of the first class, as the hymns which he afterwards published

* See a Memoir of him, by Mr. Gaulter, Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 473—8, 510—&c.

† Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 447.

abundantly testify, but it interested the uncultivated, and his preaching was made the power of God to salvation.

Paul Greenwood, to whose christian and ministerial character Mr. Pawson has borne honourable testimony, had ere this attained to some degree of maturity in the divine life. The slender memorials to which allusion has been made, and which it is the more necessary to preserve, as they have never appeared in any printed form, come home to the heart with peculiar interest, and exhibit the immediate as well as the more remote consequences which frequently follow a solitary conversion to God. He was awakened to a sense of his sin and danger by reading a religious tract—supposed to be Mr. Seagrave's Sermon on Gal. 3, 24, which publication was afterwards borrowed of the Greenwood family by Mr. Grimshaw, on his becoming resident at Haworth. One day, young Paul, under deep conviction of sin, went into the barn to pray, where he continued an unusual length of time. His father, under some unpleasant apprehensions, went to see what had become of him, and found him engaged in earnest prayer. After standing a few moments, he himself was powerfully affected—kneeled upon the ground—and began also to raise the voice of supplication. It was not long before the mother went in search of both, who stood in like manner for a short time—bowed the knee—and prayed earnestly for mercy. Soon afterwards they were joined by a brother, and then by a sister, who were no less in earnest for salvation, and they all obtained peace with God before they left the place. This event occurred before Mr. Grimshaw obtained the living of Haworth—probably in 1740 or 1741, and before the name of *Methodist* was known by any of the family. When Mr. Grimshaw, therefore, went to Haworth, he found at least one pious family in the neighbourhood, composed of the excellent of the earth; and instead of having been the instrumental cause of young Paul's conversion, which Mr. Williams was inclined to believe, but still seemed to hesitate whether to repose full confidence in the accuracy of his memory, it would rather appear that the Greenwood family—and Paul among the others, had been of service to him, by the loan Mr. Seagrave's useful sermon. The place at which the Greenwood family resided, which has been slightly adverted to, was Ponden, about two miles from Haworth; and if they had lived in the apostolic age, their eminent piety would have secured them no ordinary share of respect.

Methodism being much talked of through the country,

and Mr. Grimshaw himself being deeply serious, it is not at all surprizing that the rude specimen which appeared in his neighbourhood, and which he had in William Darney, should attract more than usual attention. Darney, as well as himself, was like a comet out of its usual course, baffling the calculations of astronomers. He scarcely knew what to make of him. Tidings of his appearance reached his ears; to which was appended,—That he preached what was considered by Mr. Grimshaw the popish doctrine of justification by faith. As the clergyman of the parish, he deemed it an imperious duty to confute the heretical notion; and, in his straight forward zeal, went to hear William Darney, with a view to give efficacy to the premeditated opposition. It so happened, that the preacher was actually treating on the subject in question, when Mr. Grimshaw entered the house; and having established his thesis by appropriate appeals to the Scriptures, the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England, Mr. Grimshaw was so far from attempting a confutation, that he was convinced of the truth of the doctrine, and gave it, in the generosity of his soul—though proceeding from the lips of one who had never studied on classic ground, a welcome reception. After this, he embraced every opportunity of conversing with him in private, taking him occasionally into a stone pit in the neighbourhood of his own house, and other retired places, where they walked to and fro in solitude, and exhibited to each other their separate views of christian doctrine, as well as unbosomed to each other their personal feelings. Such, however, was the ascendancy which shame maintained, that if a dog barked, he would shrink like the sensitive plant from the touch, and with less elevation of voice would say, ‘Hush! there is some body coming.’* This is the more remarkable, when his native fearlessness of character is brought to bear upon the fact: but he had been previously awakened to a humiliating sense of his own vileness—his former life was ever before him—he had a religious character to establish—Jonathan Maskew and Paul Greenwood, though both laymen, were partly of his own training, and had their characters gradually unfolded before the people, which unfoldment, as imperceptibly prepared the people for the exercise of their ministry; here, on the contrary, was a perfect stranger—a man, perhaps, as homely in his attire as in his language—and professing a connexion with a sect almost every where *spoken against*.

* Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 18.

Mr. Grimshaw's "*men*" had fewer prejudices to conquer, because brought into contact with a person more immediately on a level with themselves. Jonathan Maskew in particular, therefore, no sooner heard of the Methodists, and read the few publications which were before the public, than he united himself to them, and was accordingly one of the first members of society in Haworth.* His heart being filled with love to God, and zeal for his cause, he proceeded, as Methodism spread, from the neighbourhood in which he resided, into various parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The unction of his word, and the warmth of his address, were well remembered, when in the vigor of life; fearless of danger,—the inclemency of seasons,—and in the midst of violent and barbarous persecutors, he preached the gospel of God our Saviour.

Such connexions, and such prospects, only contributed to add fuel to the fire of Wm. Darney's zeal. As Mr. Grimshaw increased in knowledge and piety, the fear of man subsided; and super-added to his natural courage, he partook plentifully of that daring and fortitude, which are the result of religion and innocence, and which even delicate females have evinced on the wheel and at the stake. Wm. Darney, therefore, was not long in prevailing upon him to give out the hymn before sermon, and soon afterwards, to pray in public. This induced some of the parishioners to manifest their petty hostility, by saying "*Mad Grimshaw* has become clerk to *Scotch Will*; and *Scotch Will* is the leader of *Mad Grimshaw*."† The acquisition of Mr. Grimshaw, amply atoned for the loss of Mr. Clayton's countenance and influence; and was a sufficient sanction for his "*men*" to unite with Wm. Darney, and extend their sphere of usefulness.

In the course of the year, Wm. Darney visited Todmorden, Bacup, Mill-End, and Miller-Barn, and was instrumental in raising societies in each of these places; and these societies, with many others, were as well known by the appellation of "*Wm. Darney's Societies*," as Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, &c. were known by the name of "*John Bennet's Round*." Though it has been hazarded as a probable opinion, that Todmorden might have been visited previously to this, by John Bennet, Wm. Darney has the credit of having formed the *first society* in it; nor is this matter of surprize, as neither John Bennet nor David Taylor proceeded further

* Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 510.

† Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 13.

than the bare ministry of the word,* till they became acquainted with John Nelson and Mr. Wesley.

Mr. Grimshaw had officiated as a regular clergyman at Todmorden, before he obtained the Living of Haworth; and being respected by the parishioners, it is not improbable, that, on the tidings of his favourable reception of Wm. Darney reaching them,—even on the supposition of his recommendation being wanting, they might also be induced to lend a readier ear to his message: and yet from the intimate connexion of the former with the place, and his desire of general usefulness, it is not difficult to conceive of some secret springs being at work, which might lead him to advise the latter to go and endeavour to enlighten a people whom his own unconverted ministry had left in the dark. Accordingly, we find the humble itinerant in Todmorden and its adjacencies, in the month of May, 1744, and the first notice of his appearance is in a *barn*, at Gauksholm. While delivering the word of life to the people, John Maden, who had been invited to hear from the novelty of the circumstance, and who long afterwards adorned the Christian profession, was first led to the discovery of his deplorable condition by nature. His eyes were suffused with tears, and it was with difficulty he was restrained from crying aloud before the auditory. Wm. Darney continued in the neighbourhood nearly the space of a fortnight, preaching every evening; and though the place was five or six miles from the residence of John Maden, he was never absent. With a view to render his ministerial labours more extensively and permanently beneficial, Wm. Darney united about ten persons into a religious society, in the vicinity of Todmorden, one of whom was John Maden, who was never prevented from giving his weekly attendance during the greater part of twelve months, though resident at the distance specified.

With too much truth it might be said, “The word of the Lord was precious” in those days; for notwithstanding the pulpits that were occupied, opportunities for hearing evangelical discourses rarely occurred. Several weeks occasionally elapsed, in which such exalted privilege could be enjoyed. This produced the greater solicitation in those who had received Christ Jesus the Lord, to have his word proclaimed in their dwellings. Hence, to accommodate such persons, and the public in general, preaching was established

* Wesley's Works, vol. II. p. 158. 8vo. edit.

in many of their houses, which was the mean of reclaiming sinners from the error of their ways. John Maden, was one among many, who was but partially satisfied with the scanty pittance received at home, and often went to Haworth to hear Mr. Grimshaw, after which he would return home the same evening—the whole constituting a walk of not less than forty miles. This is only a specimen selected from the multitude. It never, however, was permitted to assume the character of labour, for John, on these felicitous occasions, would repeat with transport, while passing over the hills, the language of the Hebrew Seer, “For ye shall go forth with joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” His own bosom being inspired with song, every thing in nature became vocal.

On John Maden joining the Society, near Todmorden, he wished much to have the gospel, as preached by the Methodists, introduced into Rossendale; and with a design to accomplish this object, invited Wm. Darney, who, for the first time in that country, preached at a place called Heap-barn, where he experienced great opposition. A circumstance occurred on the occasion, illustrative of the supreme delight which a christian minister feels, when he meets a prodigal restored to the favour of God by his instrumentality. After W. Darney had proclaimed the word of salvation to the people, he clasped John Maden in his arms, whom he had not seen for a short time, exclaiming, “You are the first-fruits of my labours in this place.” He was next invited to preach at Mellor-barn, where he soon after formed a society, appointing John Maden the leader.*

In the midst of much opposition, Wm. Darney travelled from place to place, preaching and forming Societies. But he was mentally, as well qualified to brave a storm of persecution, as he was constitutionally fitted for bearing the winter rigour of those regions from whence he came: and few circumstances can better illustrate his character for persevering toil and undaunted courage, than two anecdotes noticed in the Rev. J. Stanley’s memoir of his father.† They are recorded with a touch perfectly graphic; and were it not for

* Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 523.

† Ibid. 1826, p. 797.

their distance from the scene of action, they, with others, whom the present writer has heard from the lips of the venerable subject of the memoir—who was the guide of his youth, might be adduced to place this rustic itinerant in a light the most interesting, to such as hesitate to pronounce on the cocoa-nut with a bare examination of its rude exterior.

Jonathan Maskew and Paul Greenwood being associated with him in the work, were as destitute as himself of claims to superior birth, parentage, education, or pecuniary circumstances, to induce the rabble to permit them to pass through the toll-bar of persecution without an exaction of costs. The former in particular, had not long engaged in his Master's work, before he was marked out as an object of popular vengeance. In one of the towns where he had frequently attended, he was attacked by a gang of desperadoes, no doubt either instigated or countenanced by those who were ignorantly denominated *their betters*. They seized him, stripped him naked, rolled him in the mud, and carried their injustice to a length, which had nearly deprived him of life. But this was far from interrupting his labours. His zeal, collecting fresh vigour from opposition, and neglecting the timid counsels of "the fearful," he was again seen in a state of buoyancy on the rolling surge; and this flagrant violation of law and of humanity, failed in preventing him from going to the place, to which he was persuaded his conscience and his duty called him; till at last, his enemies, ashamed of their conduct, or deserted by their supporters, left him to his delusions, that is, to call sinners to repentance, and preach,—“Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.”*

Being the year previous to the Scotch Rebellion, when a great deal of uneasiness existed, and malice—which is ever inventive, and of which there is always a plentiful stock on hand, being in full operation, it was reported of the Methodists, that they were rebels, and that the Preachers were raising men for the Pretender.† This might possibly acquire strength for a time, from the circumstance of Wm. Darney being a Scotchman; but the prevalency of such an opinion was soon checked in its spread, as well as counteracted in its influence, by Mr. Grimshaw's assumption of the itinerant character. He entered the doors which Wm. Darney had thrown open—preached—and regulated the Societies; and

* Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 511.

† Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 19.

was afterwards considered Mr. Wesley's *Assistant* of the Haworth Circuit. The people could not conceive how that rebels should ever be countenanced by a clergyman of the Establishment; and hence, the odium was soon wiped off, by some of the more reflecting part of the community, saying, "If they were rebels, a Church of England parson would not preach among them." Though it did not preclude the possibility of clerical defection, it was, upon the whole, a fair inference, and was adapted to the times and to the people.

In a state of general agitation, almost every unusual occurrence becomes ominous of great events with the young and superstitious, and is not unfrequently overruled for good to individual salvation. Thus it was with John Morris, afterwards so celebrated in the annals of Methodism in Manchester. "The year before the rebellion," says he, "a comet made its appearance; its awful aspect affected me exceedingly, and I was restrained by fear from pursuing childish follies, which restraint continued upon my mind during the time of the Rebellion."*

While the persons who have just passed in review, were expending their strength and employing their talents, among a people as uncultivated as the moors they trod, and as bold as the hills over which they were accustomed to pass, John Bennet was anxious for the improvement of the Societies to which he had given rise. In the summer of this year, therefore, he engaged Mr. Wesley to pay one of his "angel visits" to a few of them.

Thursday, June 14th, he remarks, "I accompanied John Bennet into Lancashire. I preached to a small congregation at eleven; in the afternoon, at Woodley, in Cheshire; and in the evening, at Chinley-end, in Derbyshire, on *Repent ye and believe the gospel*. Friday, 15th, I preached at Chinley, at five: about noon, in the Peak, and in the evening, at Barley-hall."†

This is the nearest approach of Mr. Wesley to Manchester, since his visit in 1738; and his not entering the town itself, is confirmatory of the conjecture already hazarded respecting the want of Mr. Clayton's countenance and support, and may be advanced as an argument in favour of Mr. Wesley's unoffending and unobtrusive demeanour, in avoiding that which might otherwise be unacceptable, so long as he

* Meth. Mag. 1795, p. 19.

† Works, vol. 28, p. 229.

had the loudest calls elsewhere, and there were no encouraging circumstances to invite him to the spot.—As he was in Leeds on the Wednesday, and had rode on horseback from Birstal, on the forenoon of the day he entered “Lancashire,” it cannot be imagined that he penetrated much beyond the precincts of the county. The “small congregation,” therefore, to which he preached “at eleven,” was very likely the one accustomed to hear John Nelson at Hopkin-pit. Mr. Wesley was conducted by the same person, the places appear to have been contiguous to each other, and the one seems to have followed the other in the order of preaching then established. The other place at which he preached “about noon in the Peak,” is equally likely to have been either Chelmorton or Bongs. During one of Mr. Wesley’s early visits to the former of these places, a poor woman having heard of his being in the country, and being unacquainted with the hours of worship, travelled over the mountains to hear him, and arrived at the house of Mr. Marsden about ten o’clock at night. Mr. Marsden informed her that the congregation had long been dismissed, and that Mr. Wesley had retired to rest. These remarks were lost upon a mere creature of feeling; and from the house she was resolved not to remove till she beheld the object of her search. Mr. Marsden stepped up stairs, apologized for disturbing his guest, and explained the cause. Mr. Wesley’s shoes and stockings were off; his neckcloth and clothes were hanging loosely round him; in this plight he hastened down stairs—shook hands with the woman—spoke a few words to her on the subject of personal religion—and bid her “good night.” She left the house as much delighted with the sight of him, as if she had become heiress to an immense estate, and like the bounding roe, ascended the mountain heights, and passed through the deep ravine to her home, as if night had been converted into day, and a world of kindred beings were pacing by her side. Trivial as this circumstance may appear, it involves in it the principal and practice of condescension, and furnishes no mean comment on that part of the christian’s character, which places him in the position of becoming “all things unto all,” for purposes of edification.

In the month of April, the year following, Mr. Wesley again visited the neighbourhood; and if he had been an experienced general, meditating an attack upon the town, he might have been suspected—though perfectly unintentional on his part, of reconnoitring, and of planting his Societies, like bastions mounted with heavy artillery around it, for the

purpose of carrying it by assault, whenever the fitful moment should arrive. But in both cases, John Bennet seems to have been the moving cause of his approach, without any pre-determination of his own.

"Friday and Saturday," he observes—being the 26th and 27th, "at John Bennet's request, I preached at several places in Lancashire and Cheshire. Sunday 28th, I preached at five (as I had done over night) about a mile from Altringham, on, *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation*. A plain man came to me afterward, and said, 'Sir, I find Mr. Hutchings and you do not preach the same way. You bid us read the bible, and pray, and go to church; but he bids us let this alone: and says, If we go to church and sacrament, we shall never come to Christ.

"At nine I preached near Stockport to a large congregation. Thence we rode to Bongs in Derbyshire, a lone house, on the side of a high, steep mountain, whither abundance of people were got before us. I preached on God's justifying the ungodly, and his word was as dew upon the tender herb. At five I preached at Mill-town, near Chapel-in-le-Frith. The poor miller, near whose pond we stood, endeavoured to drown my voice, by letting out the water, which fell with a great noise. But it was labour lost; for my strength was so increased, that I was heard to the very skirts of the congregation. Monday 29th, I preached at Taddington in the Peak, and rode from thence to Sheffield."*

Mr. Hutchings appears to have been imbued with the spirit of *quietism*,—the spirit of which Mr. Ingham, David Taylor, and several attached to the Moravians partook, who were so terribly afraid of a pharisaical dependance upon works, that they proceeded to the opposite extreme, and looked for the blessing without the full exercise of the appointed means. At Bongs, Mr. Wesley and the Preachers were entertained by a person of the name of Turner, who, together with two of his daughters, had been brought to God under the ministry of David Taylor, when David was in the height of his zeal.† Scarcely a higher compliment need be paid to the kindly feelings of Mr. Turner, than to notice, that, in the course of the preceding year, on hearing of the impressment of John Nelson, under whose preaching he had sat, he rode from Bongs, near Stockport, to York, to see him, converse with him, and impart encouragement.

* Works, vol. 28, p. 275-6.

† Wesleyan Meth. in Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 19.

On Mr. Wesley's departure, John Bennet was again left alone, with the exception of such partial and precarious aid as other places could spare from their own necessities, or accident threw in his path. It was in the latter way, in the month of June, that a preacher passed over that portion of the vineyard assigned to him, like a cloud travelling over the face of a landscape, dropping its fatness on the earth as it moves along. The evil spirit from the North, which had been conjured into existence, by a single touch of the Pretender's wand, could only be allayed by adding to the numerical force of the army. This afforded a favourable plea for persevering alive the daemon of persecution. When the enemies of Methodism, therefore, found themselves foiled in their attempts to fasten the blot of conspiracy upon the character of its professors, they veered to another quarter, and concluded that the Preachers would make excellent soldiers, and that the surest mode of extirpation would be, to send them in military array against the Pretender. Two of them had been already secured—John Nelson and Thomas Beard;* and both churchwardens and constables were in quest of others; one of whom was Richard Moss.

This good man was chased like a stag before the hunters, and his lair—to pursue the metaphor, had scarcely time to cool before the dogs of oppression were upon it. He was closely pursued at Sykehouse, beyond Doncaster. The cry was again awakened at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, the birth-place of Mr. Wesley. It was renewed at Sheffield, after a circuitous route by way of Norton, Leeds, Birstal, and Barley-hall. He then adds, in a letter to Mr. Wesley, "I went from Sheffield through Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire, to Birmingham; and so on by Evesham and Stanley. In most places I was threatened; but out of all dangers, the Lord delivered me."† On referring to this part of his history, in a memoir written by himself, he further observes, "The next day (June 14) I went through Derbyshire to my father's. On Monday 17th, I came to Wednesbury. But the brethren would not suffer me to stay, the constables being resolved to press me. So I went on to Birmingham and Evesham, and on Monday 24th, came safe to Bristol."‡ Whenever a person was marked, like a deer singled out from his fellows, information was sent in every direction, with a descriptive accompaniment: and detection, in the case of

* Wesley's Works, vol. 227, p. 228. Atmore's Meth. Memorial, p. 46.

† Wesley's Works, vol. 28, p. 310.

‡ Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 59.

Preachers, was generally the more certain, because their very offence—that of preaching, which a tenderly enlightened conscience would not permit them to forego, gave publicity to their characters, and afforded facilities to their enemies for the accomplishment of their malevolent purposes.

The object of their present pursuit, was born in the year 1718, at Hurlston, in the county of Chester. His parents were poor; and his mother dying when he was three years of age, he was taken by his grandfather, by whom he was brought up and to whom he was apprenticed. At the age of nineteen, he went to London, where, as heretofore, he experienced deep awakenings, and indulged freely in dissipation; and considering his years, Dryden's translation of a line of Juvenal, was not inapplicable to the state to which he had attained:

“ Vice is at a stand, and at the highest flow.”*

Just before he had finished his climactrical career in iniquity, he was induced to go and hear Mr. Whitfield preach on Kennington-Common, where a person dropt down dead at his side. He could not have been more appalled, if a thunderbolt had dropt at his feet. Conviction deepened, and at length terminated in a general renewal of nature. He entered the house of Mr. Wesley, at the Foundry, in 1744, in the capacity of a servant; accompanied him to the north in the spring of the present year;† and was there pressed in spirit to give a word of exhortation to the people. His sphere of usefulness was soon enlarged; and after enduring much persecution, and travelling through a considerable part of the kingdom, he was ordained, some time in 1752;‡ by the Bishop of London, as a Missionary for the Island of Providence, one of the Bahama Islands, in the West Indies, where he preached the gospel with success for several years, in company with Mr. Tizard, his fellow labourer, and at length finished his course with joy.††

In the course of the month succeeding Richard Moss's visit, Mr Wesley remarks, “ Great was our joy in the Lord at the public reading of the letters. Part of one was as follows:

“ Betley, near Namptwich, Aug. 24th, 1745.

“ I rejoice that the Lord stirs you up more and more, to labour in his vineyard. I am persuaded, it is not a small matter, whether we speak or let it alone. If I go into any

* Omne in præcipiti vitium stetit.—*Sat. I.*

† Wesley's Works, vol. 28, p. 259.

‡ Myle's Chron. Hist. p. 448.

†† Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 59.

company, and there be an opportunity to reprove or exhort, and I come away without using it, I am as much condemned in my conscience, as if I had robbed them. Pray for me, that I may have patience to endure the contradiction of sinners, and that I may always remember, the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

" Sunday, Aug. 4. We met as usual. As soon as we had begun prayer, there came the curate, with a lawyer. He staid till we had done prayer, and then asked, 'What is the intent of your meeting?' I answered, 'To build each other up in our most holy faith.' He said, 'But what method do you use?' I answered, 'This is the third Sunday that I have met these my brethren. The first Sunday we read the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, and exhorted one another, to follow after the holiness and happiness there described. Last Sunday we considered the sixth. And now, if we are not hindered, we shall go on to the seventh.' He bad us, 'Go on; and he would stay a little and hear us.' By the desire of the rest, I read the chapter, which I had scarce done, when the lawyer began a long harangue, concerning the danger we were in of running mad. I answered, 'Sir, as I perceive you have no design to help us, if you will not hinder us, we shall take it as a favour.' He went out directly, and left the curate with us, who began to exhort us, not to be over anxious about our salvation, but to divert ourselves a little. I told him, 'Sir, we desire whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God.' 'What, said he, do you deny all diversions?' I said, 'All which do not agree with that rule.' He hurried away, and said, as he went, 'I wish you do not fall into some error.'

" The following week, grievous threatenings were given out, of what we should suffer if we met again. On Friday 9th, a gentleman sent for me, and told me, he would hire a mob, to pull the house down; for we were the most disturbing dogs in the nation. I said, 'Sir, if there be a disturbance now, it will lie at *your* door. A few of us intend to meet on Sunday, after sermon, to encourage one another in serving God. You say, if we do, you will have the house pulled down. And then you will say, we have *made* the disturbance!' He said, he would send for me another time, and would have an hour's discourse with me.

" On Sunday the man at whose house we were to meet, was warned by his landlady, not to receive us; for if he did, the house would surely be pulled down. However, he did receive us. A great many people coming about the house,

he told them, if they had a mind they might come in: so they came in, as many as the house would hold. I told them all the design of our meeting. Then we prayed, and I read the first chapter of St. James, and spoke a little on those words, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.* And two more of our brethren testified, by their own experience, that he is a God of truth. They stood as dumb men, till we had done, nor did one afterward open his mouth against us.

"From this time we have been threatened more and more, especially by the gentry, who say they will send us all for soldiers. Nevertheless, on Sunday 18th, we had a quiet and comfortable meeting. We considered the third chapter of the first epistle of St. Peter, which was the evening lesson for the day. We were thankful for the record that is there left us, of the treatment we are to meet with. And we are all much humbled, that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of Christ.

"I have been ill this fortnight, having got a great cold, but am obliged to keep it to myself as much as I can: because a person cannot have the very form of godliness, but if he is sick, that is the cause of it. I seem not to desire life or death, but that the will of God may be done."*

It is possible that Richard Moss might be the remote means of originating these meetings. He was well known in Middlewich, and a considerable distance round it;† he was at his father's house about the 15th and 16th of June; the first meeting commenced on the 14th of the month following; and not any notice is taken of preaching, either occasional or established, beyond what they seem to have heard in the Establishment. Thus, another partially prepared plot of ground seemed waiting to receive the incorruptible seed of the word, which John Bennet was scattering into the furrows, that the Divine Being was turning up in the order of his providence.

* Works, vol. 28, p. 311.

† Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 6.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Wesley's visit into Cheshire—Scotch Rebellion—Richard Bradley—John Maden deserted in Rossendale—Mr. John Butterworth joins the Society, his conversion and call to the ministry—Persecution at Colne—John Jane put into the stocks—Mr. Wesley again passes over part of the ground—Mrs. Holmes—Skircoat-green, near Halifax—Abraham Kershaw—Robert Swindels exercises his gifts at Woodley—The work spreads in Cheshire—Letter from John Bennet—Chester—Rochdale—Holme—Persecution continued—Mr. Charles Wesley's arrival in Manchester, his interview with Mr. Clayton—Richard Barlow—The first preaching-room in Manchester—A society formed—Another visit by Mr. John Wesley, who preaches at Keighly, Haworth, Skircoat-green, Halifax, Roughlee, Widdap, Shore, Todmorden-edge, Rossendale, Salford-Cross, Davy-hulme, Booth-bank, Old-field-brow, Congleton, Macclesfield, Stabley-hall, Bongs, and Chinley—Mrs. Alice Cross.

MR. WESLEY, who had hitherto visited the neighbourhood of Manchester, as an itinerant preacher, through the pressing invitation of others, soon began to pay attention to it from a sense of duty, and accordingly entered it into his places of visitation. The first of these self-determined and regular visits appears to have been in the month of November, where he stands in a perfectly unassociated form. A paragraph, with which his visit is ushered into notice, will shew the state of the country at the time.

“ Before nine we met several expresses sent to countermand the march of the army into Scotland, and to inform them that the rebels had passed the Tweed, and were marching southward.

“ Thursday, 7th, I rode to Stabley-hall in Cheshire, after many interruptions in the way, by those poor tools of watchmen, who stood with great solemnity, at the end of almost every village. I preached there on Mark 1, 15, and rode on to Bradbury-green.

" Friday 8th, understanding that a neighbouring gentleman, Dr. C. had affirmed to many, 'That Mr. Wesley was now with the Pretender near Edinburgh,' I wrote him a few lines: it may be he will have a little more regard to truth or shame, for the time to come.

" About noon, I preached near Maxfield; in the evening, at the Black-house. Saturday 9th. In the afternoon, we came to Penkridge, and lit on a poor drunken, cursing, swearing landlord, who seemed scarce to think there was either God or devil. But I had spoke very little, when his countenance changed, and he was so full of his thanks and blessings, that I could hardly make an end of my sentence."*

Stabley-hall, Bradbury-green, and Back-house, may be considered as so many additional places at which preaching had been established; and Mr. Wesley having visited some of the older stations during his preceding tour, appears on his route to have passed them, and to have acted the part of a father, in stretching forth his hand, in order to aid the infantile steps of such as were less able to support themselves.

Richard Bradley, whose portrait is prefixed to this work, was at this time a stout boy, inhaling the healthful breeze on Longbridge Fell,† while driving the plough; and saw a part of the English army on their march, when proceeding to meet the Scotch rebels. Some of the soldiers were entertained at his father's house, though a Roman Catholic, and very inimical to government. As yet, Methodism had not reached the Fell, but like the army, was on its march in that direction: and if we return to Rossendale Forest—a district extending from the township of Eccleshill to that of Bacup, which was then the nearest seat of Methodism to it, we shall find the face of the landscape darkened, and a cloud bursting on the head of John Maden.

The stability of this young convert was tried in a way he had not anticipated. To the amount of nearly twelve persons, who had regularly attended the ministry of the word, and other means of grace, and of whose salvation he had a good hope, suddenly abandoned him; some relapsing into their former profane habits, while others imbibed the delusive tenets of the Antinomians. But, though thus circumstanced, the language of his heart was, "I will never forget thy statutes; for by them thou hast quickened me." He stood like a rock in the midst of "ocean solitude." Still, though firm and alone, he was not without hope, that when

* Works, vol. 28, p. 339.

† A mountain three miles north of Ribchester.

the tempest should subside and the waters should lower, others would make their appearance, and by shewing their summits, would gladden his heart and encircle his form. To hasten so desirable an object, he entered upon a farm, and received the preachers into his house. He then had an opportunity of more closely observing the piety of those who ministered in holy things; some of the most early of whom were Messrs. Darney, Larwood,* and Colbeck. He made a pulpit, and employed his influence to induce people to hear the word, which had proved "spirit and life" to his own soul. Another house was taken, which soon proved too small to contain the increasing congregation. The Society was then accommodated for a short time, with the use of the Baptists' meeting-house.†

Among others who joined the Methodist Society in Rossendale, in its infancy, was the late Rev. John Butterworth, of Coventry, the author of a valuable Concordance, re-edited by Dr. Adam Clarke, and father of the late Joseph Butterworth, Esq. M. P. who was long a distinguished member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, in the metropolis. Mr. John Butterworth, was born Dec. 13, 1727, at Goodshaw Chapel, a village in Rossendale. His parents were deeply pious; and, on account of their friendly catholic spirit, were greatly respected by serious people of all denominations. John was one of five sons, all of whom were truly devoted to God, and three of whom, in addition to himself, were, in process of time, called to the ministry, and appointed to the pastoral office, by respective Baptist churches. Several interesting particulars are stated by him in a manuscript, dated March 7, 1800. He was taught at the school, and sate under the ministry of Mr. Crossley, a popular calvinist preacher, who had been personally acquainted with John Bunyan. After the death of Mr. Crossley, he attended the ministry of Mr. Ashworth, a Baxterian; and had to walk over the mountains with his parents to the place of worship,—a regular distance of two miles, and occasionally four or five. His first acquaintance with the Wesleyan body, is thus stated by himself.

"We had frequently heard of the Methodists, and read of their preaching in the fields; and particularly that Mr. Whitfield often preached to 10,000 people, or more, at Blackheath, and other places. He had indeed some correspondence, by letter, with Mr. Crossley. About this time

* See Wesleyan Meth. in Sheffield, for Mr. Larwood, p. 36.

† Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 524.

(i. e. 1745) they came into our country. Mr. Wesley was published to preach near New Church, in Rossendale, at five o'clock one morning. I went to hear him: he had a numerous auditory, and preached from Rom. 3, 22. 'For there is no difference,' &c. I was struck with his discourse, and became a constant hearer of the Methodists when they came their rounds; and also attended their private meetings;—yet I still attended Mr. Ashworth's ministry at other times." He then proceeds with a detail of the operations of the Spirit of God upon his heart, and adds, "The same night, after these workings of mind, I went to hear one John Nelson, a Methodist preacher: a man who had gone through much persecution, had been pressed for a soldier; but notwithstanding many threatenings, maintained his integrity, and often reproved both men and officers for their profanity; and, in time, obtained his discharge. He preached from Matt. 8, 2, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' He possessed much solidity and zeal; and many were affected under his discourse. I thought they all seemed more affected than myself; that the discourse seemed to have no good effect upon me. The hardness of my heart had already been my trouble; and because of which all the sermons I had heard were ineffectual. I returned home with a heavy spirit, crying to God that he would take away the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh." He further observes, "The doctrine of assurance of faith, and of knowing our sins pardoned, was much insisted upon by the Methodist preachers. This I wanted to know, for I was not certain that I was a subject of grace; but I determined to be in the way of earnest prayer, and attendance on all the means in my power.

On obtaining the assurance for which he sought, and on which the Methodist Preachers so strenuously insisted, he continues, "About this time I had strong desires of preaching Christ to my fellow sinners; and many thoughts occupied my mind how I could reason with them respecting the deceitfulness, absurdity, and danger of sin, and the excellency, importance, and happiness of godliness. Accordingly, I prayed to the Lord to give me grace and talents for the important work, and at times I spoke a few words at our private prayer-meetings; but had no idea, at that time, of being tried and regularly called out by an orderly church of Christ, being then among the Methodists. I had, indeed, been baptized by Mr. Ashworth, but did not design to be a

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member of his Church, as I apprehended that little of the life and power of religion was amongst them; but having a strong desire to speak of the things I believed and had experienced, I informed a few friends that I would carry on a meeting, at my father's house next Lord's day in the afternoon. More people came than I expected; however, with much diffidence, I attempted to speak from John 6, 40. Before I had finished, my father and mother came from their meeting, much surprized to find me preaching: I was invited to preach again in the evening, about a mile distant, and I complied. These words had been impressed upon my mind: 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.' 1. Pet. 4. 10."

Mr. Wesley's visit into Rossendale, of which Mr. Butterworth takes notice, must have been subsequent to the date with which it stands connected, as his Journals testify it was not till some time after this, that he preached in that country: the date of 1745, therefore, must refer to the introduction of Methodism into the Forest, which is in perfect accordance with other documents attesting its first appearance to be "*about*" the period specified. In John Nelson's Journal, there is an account of only the most remarkable incidents connected with his personal history, with a very partial reference to dates; and as it is probable that nothing very extraordinary distinguished this journey, it is entirely omitted in his pages. It is likely, however, to have taken place soon after his release from military captivity, as there appears to be a portion of time but partially accounted for, between his release and his route to London at the solicitation of Mr. Wesley.*

Mr. Butterworth was at length gradually led to separate from the Methodists, and to attach himself to the Calvinists. The Baptist Church in Coventry being in want of a pastor, and hearing a flattering account of him, they invited him in the year 1751, to pay them a visit. He was approved of, and in due time accepted the call; was ordained to the pastoral office, and, after having preached upwards of fifty years to them, died full of faith and good works, April 24th, 1803, in the 76 year of his age. Dr. Adam (then Mr.) Clarke, preached his funeral sermon, on the evening of May 6th, from 1. Cor. 15, 55, 57.† Thus, the Methodists were in

* Journal 170—173.

† Evangel. Mag. 1804, p. 249.

some way connected with this good man, both in his opening prospects, and at the closing scene of his earthly pilgrimage.

Though Messrs. Darney, Greenwood, and Maskew, had in some measure prepared the way for the more easy introduction of the gospel into places which they had not actually visited, and for which they had really no leisure, yet others resisted all immediate approach. Colne,* already named, was strongly garrisoned by a set of turbulent spirits; and such was their determined opposition, that a mere straggler from the little religious bands around, was sufficient to excite a commotion among the populace. The circumstances of the case had been unknown, but for an incidental notice, by Mr. Wesley, in his Journal of 1776.† “In the evening,” he observes, “I preached in a kind of square, at Colne, to a multitude of people, all drinking in the word. I scarcely ever saw a congregation wherein men, women, and children stood in such a posture; and this is the town, wherein thirty years ago no Methodist could shew his head! The first that preached here was John Jane, who was innocently riding through the town, when the zealous mob pulled him off his horse, and put him in the stocks! He seized the opportunity, and vehemently exhorted them to flee from the wrath to come.”

John Jane is stated‡ to have been a man of “simplicity, integrity, and uprightness,” and to have died “in the midst of his days.” His exit, according to Mr. Myles,|| took place in 1750; and if so, it must have occurred after the month of March, as towards the close of that month, he is represented as having “travelled from Bristol to Holy-head, with three shillings in his pocket, and had one penny left,”—§ a case not uncommon in the infancy of the work, to support which, not only the preachers, but many of the inferior agents employed, were called upon to exhibit some rare instances of penury and pedestrianism. Not long after he had delivered his discourse from the stocks, the blow was followed up by John Nelson, who preached in a part of the town called Ninevah. It was there that John Dean, then a boy, and yet living (1827) in the neighbourhood of Colne, first heard him. The venerable man, when conversing with the writer respecting “departed days,” represented John Nelson as “a powerful man, with broad shoulders,” and as having contracted a habit of winking, when he was about to advance any thing

* About 30 miles N. N. E. of Manchester.

† Works, vol. 33, p. 10, for 1776. ‡ Atmore's Mem. p. 217. || Chron. Hist. p. 447.

‡ Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 92.

pithy." From Nineveh, the place of preaching was removed successively to two other houses, at each of which—probably from hostile causes, the residence was of a short duration. The next remove was to Dent-back, where a large room was occupied, with the separate apartments of two or three families underneath. A person of the name of Richard Lancaster, originally from Gisbourne, was the first that received and entertained the preachers in Colne.

In the month of February, the year following, Mr. Wesley touched on the skirts of the societies in these parts. "Friday 21," says he, "we breakfasted at Bradbury-green: whence we rode on to Marsden, and the next day, Sat. 22, to Leeds.—Monday 24, I preached at Skircoat-green, near Halifax, to a whole company of quakers. The good man of the house, about four-score years old, had formerly been a speaker among them. But from fear of man, he desisted, and so quenched the spirit, that he was in darkness for near forty years: till hearing John Nelson declare the love of God in Christ, light again sprung up in his soul.—In the evening I preached to a quiet congregation, at Bradford. Tuesday 25, about nine, I began at Keighly. Then, (finding the snow was so deep, I could not go through the vales,) I went the straight way, and came to Newcastle, Wednesday 26."*

When Mr. Wesley visited the neighbourhood of Halifax in 1742, since which period till now he had not been there, it was in consequence of an invitation from Mrs. Holmes, of Smithhouse, at Lightcliffe; during which visit, he spent some time also with Dr. Leigh, Vicar of Halifax, whom he entitled a "Candid inquirer after truth." Mrs. Holmes was then apparently the only person in that neighbourhood, who ventured to brave the obliquy and hostility of the times. But she was elevated both by providence and grace beyond the ordinary reach of the vulgar, possessing, with unquestionable piety, considerable property. She erected a building for the convenience and support of the Moravians, which is still standing, and which they continued to occupy till the time of her death, in 1781. Her residence was about four miles from Halifax, and was open for the reception of christian ministers of every denomination.

On the present occasion, Smithhouse was omitted, and Skircoat-green, a mile south of Halifax, was the scene of operation. The old gentleman, at whose house Mr. Wesley preached, was Abraham Kershaw; and it is to his daughter

* Works, vol. 28, p. 354.

Mr. Wesley refers, when he says, "I baptized Elizabeth K.* one of the Quakers." This female, previously to this, had invited John Bennet† to preach in the village, through whose instrumentality a Society had been raised; and it was owing to an invitation from the members of that society, that Mr. Wesley paid the present visit. The house in which he preached, may still be seen on the side of the hill, between Skircoat-green and Copley Hall, and was formerly a Roman Catholic Chapel, to which a burial ground was attached.

In again directing the attention to the societies more immediately in the neighbourhood of Manchester, appearances of rather a flattering character begin to exhibit themselves. Robert Swindels, who was connected with the society at Woodley, had acted for some time in the capacity of a Local Preacher, and afterwards entered the itinerant life, in which he long adorned the christian character as well as the ministerial office. While in these parts, and especially at such a time, his labours were stamped with the value of choice gold in a season of scarcity. John Bennet too, continued to exercise all his energies in the good cause. The following letter, which Mr. Wesley prefaces with "Some account of the beginning of the present work of God in Cheshire and Lancashire," affords an interesting picture to the contemplative eye of the christian.

"Chinley, March 7th, 1746—7.

"Sir,

"This day I have given Mr. *Charles Wesley* a particular account of the Societies in *Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire*, according to his request.

"His coming was not in vain. Surely a little cloud of witnesses are arisen amongst us, who received the word of reconciliation under his ministry. I trust God will send you also hither, to water the good seed of his word.

"Last week I spent three days in and about *Chester*, and the word was gladly received. I am assured, that the time is come that the gospel must be preached in that city. The inhabitants received me gladly, and said, 'We have heard of *Wesley*, and read his books: why could you not have come hither sooner?' They also desired that I would write immediately, and entreat you to come up thither also.

* Works vol. 29, p. 31.

† Mr. Hatton, who has drawn up a short sketch of Wesleyan Methodism in Halifax &c. gives Mr. C. Hopper the credit of aiding in the formation of the Society, anterior to Mr. Wesley's visit, p. 6. but by looking into his memoirs, it will be ascertained that he did not leave the north till 1749. Meth Mag. 1781 p. 90.

I expounded at a town four miles from *Chester*, where several of our friends (unknown to you) came to hear me. A little Society is begun near *Namptwich*, and they have got your hymn-books, &c. *These long to see you.*

"The manner I proceeded at *Chester* was as followeth : I heard a religious society was kept in the city, and so I made an inquiry, and found them out ; upon which I was desired to preach, and afterwards pressed to stay longer, or visit them again. I think your way is plain and open into these parts. I desire, if you can, you will allow yourself some time, and visit them in your return from the north. If you intend so to do, please to let me know in time, that I may give notice ; for the people will come from each quarter.

"Some young men in *Manchester* (that spoke with Mr. *Charles* when he was with us last) have begun a Society, and took a room, and have subscribed their names in a letter to Mr. *Charles*, desiring you will own them as brethren, and visit them in your return. They also desire any of us *Helpers* in the gospel may call on them. I have sent their letter to *London*.—Dear Sir, do not forget us.

"I have been at *Rochdale* some few times since Mr. *Charles* was there, and begun a little Society. The town is alarmed, and in prospect of much opposition, notwithstanding the word is gladly received, and multitudes flock to hear. This town is eight miles from *Manchester*, directly in your way from *Yorkshire*.

"On Monday the 2nd of this instant, as I was expounding in *John Heywood's* house at *Holme*, five miles from *Manchester*, a band of wicked, drunken men, with clubs and staves, having a petty steward of a neighbouring gentleman at their head as captain or leader, and gathering together by the blowing of a horn, came and assaulted the house, breaking the windows, pulling the *thatch* off some part of the house. I was obliged to leave off expounding, and we fell on our knees and prayed. The shouts and acclamations for some time abated, and I spoke to the people again. No sooner had I begun, but the bells at *Eccles* and *Flixton* began to ring, and then they broke into the house. I was directed to go away to a friend's house, which I did, and so escaped their malice. I found such solid peace as I never had done before in trouble. It is not in the power of men or devils to interrupt a man's peace a moment, that looks with a single eye to God.

"I am, your unworthy Brother and Son in the Gospel,
JOHN BENNET."

"P. S. I must confess, that I lately looked upon man as a mere machine. And whoever considers man as such, cannot possibly escape falling into the doctrine of *Reprobation* and *Election*. I looked upon man in this light, from reading some authors, which has caused me many an uneasy hour: I wish all my young brethren may escape this *place of torment*. Unguarded expressions which we have used in our exhortations, have given rise to the Calvinistic doctrine, as also to Antinomianism."*

To have been able to present the reader with a copy of the letter which the "young men" put into the hands of Mr. Charles Wesley, with their respective signatures affixed to it, and which John Bennet forwarded to London, would have afforded as supreme a delight to the writer, as the names of the chartered few would have been beheld with curiosity and interest by the multitudes who have followed in their train, and who also have had their names enrolled among the living in Jerusalem: and it is hoped, that not one of them will be wanting, when the Judge of all the earth "writeth up the people." The number must have been extremely small indeed, otherwise Mr. Richard Barlow must have had his name recorded; for "A few months before his death," says the Rev. George Marsden, "I had an opportunity of conversing with him respecting the state of Methodism in Manchester in his early days; he dwelt on the subject with delight, and informed me that when he joined the society, there were but *fourteen* or *fifteen* members in the whole town."† As the natural construction to be put upon the phrase—"joined the society," must rather refer to the society in Manchester, than to his union with the Methodists as a body, it should seem that he was not at the *formation*, but only one who immediately added to the number after its establishment.

It is not a little remarkable, that Mr. CHARLES WESLEY should have the credit of giving the name to the *first* METHODIST SOCIETY in *Manchester*, abstracted from that raised up by Mr Clayton, whose members were more intimately connected with the church; and the more so, as John Nelson had obtained the precedence of him in the town, and Mr. John Wesley and John Bennet had appeared with the seed basket of eternal truth in their hands in the neighbourhood. But as the "young men" seem to have been volunteers in the work—to have "spoken" to Mr. Charles—"begun a society"—and taken "a Room," all that he had to do was, to

* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 472.

† Ibid. 1819 p. 695.

receive "their names," and, in connexion with his brother John, to "own them as brethren." This, he appears to have done, and Mr. John Wesley was with them in person as soon as circumstances would admit.

It may be presumed, that Mr. Charles Wesley was at Chinley, in Derbyshire, when John Bennet wrote, as the latter dates his letter from thence, and states the account to have been delivered to the former on the same "day:" and it is no less correct, that this was his second visit to the neighbourhood, if not the town of Manchester itself. It was in the course of the *first* visit, that the "young men" *spoke* to Mr Charles—for it was "when he was with us *last*;" and before he again appeared, they had taken a *room* and *commenced* their *meetings*; but were unorganized and without a leader. The expression, however, "when he was with us *last*," sets the mind afloat, like a vessel pushed off from the shore, and we are as much out at sea as John Bennet was out from his home when engaged in his "round." John Bennet's "*with us*," is as extensive in its application as the societies which he had formed and regularly visited. But Mr. Charles Wesley, in passing from place to place, very likely took Manchester in his way; and this seems to be supported by the expression—"Some young men *in* Manchester—not *from* it, and entering into conversation with him in its vicinity.

Much useful and curious information has been lost to the Methodist body, in consequence of Mr. Charles Wesley not adopting the plan of his brother John, in keeping a regular Journal. The public might, in such case, have been furnished with an account of his interview with his old collegiate friend, Mr. Clayton; though not perhaps with his own mode of address. When not officiating himself, he invariably, as well as Mr. John, attended the service of the Established Church: and as preaching was unknown in "church hours" in the early days of Methodism, he went to hear his friend Mr. Clayton, and to receive the elements of bread and wine at his hand. This, as there had been no formal breach between them, and the courtesies of ancient friendship would naturally lead to an early interview—in whatever place it might occur, or whatever the character it might sustain, was probably during one or other of the visits noticed by John Bennet. At the close of the service, they approached each other; but there was something in Mr. Clayton's manner and address, which drew from Charles a sentiment expressive of the change which he perceived to have taken place, and in the language of the patriarch, ac-

costed him, while stedfastly looking at him,—“The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” The mild intonations of the voice were still heard, but the spirit was gone which produced in earlier days the cordial grasp. There was no corresponding chord between the hand and the heart, to vibrate to the notes of old friendship; and to grasp the hand without a return, was to Charles—what it must be to any man of spirit, like shaking hands with the dead. The exquisite sensibility of Charles was put to the test, and it was thus that he gave expression to his feelings. He recollected the time when they took “sweet counsel” together—when they espoused the same cause—bore the same reproach—and witnessed the same confession; he recollected too, that Mr. Clayton’s pulpit was of easy access to his brother, till other churches were denied him, on account of his zeal for the salvation of perishing thousands; and it was no doubt a review of these things, which occasioned him, in the warmth of his feelings, to draw from its scabbard this two-edged sword—“The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” There is evidently what may be termed a *double entendre*. Charles looked two ways—at the past and the present—and the employment of such a weapon evinces as much dexterity as keenness.

The *Room* which was taken by the “young men,” and in which the *first* METHODIST SOCIETY, connected with the itinerant system, worshipped, has been a matter of curious research with many for several years. The most authentic information that can be obtained, may be collected from what follows. Mr. Marsden, who had his information from Mr. R. Barlow, states, that “The place in which they had preaching was a small room in a house near the river Irwell,” and that “a person lived in the room, where she had her spinning-wheel, her coals, her bed, chairs, and table.”* Mr. Hopper calls it “A little garret by the river side,” and affirms that he “preached” in it.† After the erection of Oldham-street Chapel, Mr. Hopper, when preaching at one of the Conferences, took occasion to congratulate the friends by adverting to early times, and shewed the progress which the cause had made in Manchester. Those who heard him, and communicated the fact to the writer, intimated that the impression produced was powerful. Surrounded by the Preachers, and by some who had witnessed the first Room, he observed, “You have here what may be considered a

* Meth. Mag. 1819, p. 695.

† Ibid. 1781, p. 90.

noble edifice, and have now become a great people; but I recollect the period when you were few in number. When I first made my entrance among you, I preached in an old garret that overhung the river, in the neighbourhood of the old bridge. The coals were in one corner of the room—the looms in another—and I was in danger of breaking my neck in getting up to it. When the congregation was collected the first evening, it did not consist of more than from twenty to thirty persons.” His solemn improvement of the subject soon toned down any lighter feeling which the quaint expression of *breaking his neck* was calculated to excite. There is in each of these accounts, an agreement as it regards the place, and *looms* might be added to the *spinning-wheel* in 1749, when Mr. Hopper occupied the garret. In all this, however, there is not a single hand to direct to the identical spot. Dr. Townley observes in a letter to the writer, that Mrs. Bennet informed him, that “The room was near Blackfriar’s Bridge:” and this is consonant with a circumstantial account which has been furnished by a person of the name of Thomas Berry, whose parents lived in the house at the time, and who himself first drew the vital air within its walls.

“The site of the house,” says he, “was a rock on the bank of the Irwell, exactly over the main sewer, excavated out of the solid stone, through which the water pours itself into the river. It is on the north side of Blackfriar’s Bridge, immediately adjoining it. This is a remarkable circumstance by which its precise situation may ever be known. The house itself stood at the bottom of a large yard, known at that time by the name of the ‘Rose and Crown yard,’ which name was derived from a public house at the top of it, whose sign-board had those representations, and whose front looked into Deansgate. The entrances to it were two,—the one of which was the ‘Rose and Crown’ entry, leading out of Deansgate, the door of the public-house being on the right hand,—and the other at the bottom of the yard, on the left hand, which came out beside the ‘Ring of Bells’ public-house, whose back part entered the yard, and stood near the top of the steps leading to the old Blackfriar’s Bridge. There were a number of wood-built cottages, partly thatched, on each side of the yard; but the house in which the room was occupied for preaching, was built of brick, three stories high, slated on the roof, and had a cellar in the back part of it, which was towards the river, and which cellar was for the use of the respective tenants. The ground floor was occupied as a joiner’s shop; the two rooms in the middle story, by my father and mother, who had

not been long married; and the garret by the person who allowed the use of it for preaching, who worked with Mr. Richard Barlow, Packer, Market-street, and afterwards, through a kind providence, acquired considerable property in the cotton line. My father's name was James Berry, and was a Fustian-shearer by trade. The garret was generally well filled, when there was preaching; and I have heard my mother say, that she was often afraid of the roof falling through, for one of the main beams was very much cracked. Mr. Hopper, and others, used to preach in it. My father left the house in 1760, the interior of which was afterwards burnt, but again repaired and occupied as a dwelling-house. Sometime about 1805, it was taken down, together with the other houses, and a number of warehouses, which go by the name of "*Bateman's Buildings*," were erected in their stead. No. 10, at the bottom of the yard, occupies the site of the old preaching house. The principal entrance is through a gateway, leading into Deansgate; though there is another on the right hand, as we proceed to Blackfriar's Bridge. It was with pleasure that I heard Mr. Hopper refer to the old house, several years after, when preaching before the Conference."

This description is too minute to have been given by any one, except by a person who was writing from his own knowledge of the subject; and the accounts, as a whole, are like so many rays of light verging to one point. The only apparent difference, of any importance, is that which adds a male inhabitant to the garret; but this is an improvement rather than a contradiction. One circumstance which must not be omitted is, that the house stood upon *parsonage ground*; and thus, not like the guilty flying for sanctuary to the altar, but to employ a more homely simile, like a few scared rooks—for they were persecuted by the hand, and blackened by the tongue—yes, like a few scared rooks—winging their upward way to the highest towers of some of our ancient abbeys, the "young men" who subscribed their names to Methodism, took religious refuge in the uppermost story of this old building, which was nodding over the cliff whose base was washed by the Irwell, where their cries pierced the heavens, and they were less exposed to the din and gaze of the vulgar, than they otherwise would have been, provided they had made the selection of a ground-floor. Hence, the Methodists in Manchester, cannot only exult in having a Fellow of the Old Collegiate Church for the first professor of their principles, and of receiving, by a

formal acknowledgement, their title from a regular clergyman, but of taking up their first residence on ground connected with the ministers of the Establishment. For the clergy, therefore, wilfully to oppose the Wesleyan Methodists, or the Wesleyan Methodists to oppose the clergy in such a town, would appear almost as ungracious and as unnatural, as for children of the same parent to rise up in rebellion against each other, on the reception of their respective patrimonies.

A Society being now formed, and a room taken, we find Mr. Wesley on his way to the town in the month of April.

"Thursday 30," says he, "I rode to Keighley. The ten persons I joined here are increased to above a hundred. And above a third of them can rejoice in God, and walk as becomes the gospel.

"Friday, May 1, I read prayers and preached in Haworth church, to a numerous congregation. In the evening I preached near Skircoat-green. Sept. 2, I preached at Halifax, to a civil, senseless congregation.

"Monday 4. At his earnest request I began examining W. D's. (Darney's) Societies. At three I preached at Great Harding; in the evening at Roughlee; where there *was* a large society. But since the men of smooth tongue broke in upon them, they are every man afraid of his brother: half of them ringing continually in the ears of the rest, 'No works, no law, no bondage.' However, we gathered above forty of the scattered sheep, who are still minded to stand in the old paths.

Tuesday 5. I preached at Roughlee at five: about eleven at Hinden, and about three at Widdap, a little village in the midst of huge, barren mountains, where also there *was* a society. But Mr. B. had effectually dispersed them, so that I found but three members left.

"We rode thence about five miles to Stonesey-gate, which lies in a far more fruitful country. Here was a larger congregation at six o'clock than I had seen since my leaving Birstal. They filled both the yard and the road to a considerable distance, and many were seated on a large wall adjoining; which being built of loose stones, in the middle of the sermon, all fell down at once. I never saw, heard, nor read of such a thing before. The whole wall and the persons sitting upon it, sunk down together, none of them screaming out, and very few altering their posture. And not one was hurt at all; but they appeared sitting at the bottom, just as they sat at the top. Nor was there any in-

terruption either of my speaking, or of the attention of the hearers.

"Wednesday 6. I rode to Shore, four miles south from Stonesey, lying about half way down an huge, steep mountain. Here I preached at twelve to a loving, simple-hearted people. We then climbed up to Todmorden-edge, the brow of a long chain of mountains, where I called a serious people to *Repent and believe the gospel*.

"Thursday 7. We left the mountains, and came down to the fruitful valley of Rossendale. Here I preached to a large congregation of wild men; but it pleased God to hold them in chains. So that even when I had done, none offered any rudeness, but all went quietly away.

"We came to Manchester between one and two. I had no thought of preaching here, till I was informed John Nelson had given public notice, that I would preach at one o'clock. I was now in a great strait. Their house would not contain a tenth part of the people. And how the unbroken spirits of so large a town would endure preaching in the street, I knew not. Besides that having rode a swift trot for several hours, and in so sultry a day, I was both faint and weary. But after considering that I was not going a warfare at my own cost, I walked straight to Salford-cross. A numberless crowd of people partly ran before, partly followed after me. I thought it best not to sing, but looking round asked abruptly, 'Why do you look as if you had never seen me before? Many of you have seen me in the neighbouring church, both preaching and administering the sacrament.' I then began, *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near*. None interrupted us at all, or made any disturbance, till as I was drawing to a conclusion, a big man thrust in, with three or four more, and bad them 'Bring out the engine.' Our friends desired me to remove into a yard just by; which I did, and concluded in peace.

"About six we reached Davy-hulme, five miles from Manchester, where I was much refreshed both in preaching and meeting the society. Their neighbours here used to disturb them much. But a Justice of peace, who feared God, granting them a warrant for the chief of the rioters, from that time they were in peace.

"Friday 8. I preached at Oldfield-brow, to a much larger congregation, though many of them had been hurt by doubtful disputations. But they now began again to take root downward and bear fruit upward.

“ In the evening I preached at Booth-bank, among a quiet and loving people. But a famous Baptist teacher, Joseph Pickup, by name, had lately occasioned some disturbance among them. He had given them a particular account of a conference he had had with me on the road; ‘What he said, and what I said: and how he had stopt my mouth with the seventeenth article.’ In the morning, I told them the plain fact. I had overtook him on the road, and we rode half a bow-shot together, but did not exchange five sentences till we parted.

“ About noon I preached at Mr. Anderton’s, Northwich: several of the gay and rich were there: I continued praying and talking with them, till past two. We were then obliged to take horse for Astbury.

“ Here likewise I found an open door, though many fine people were of the congregation. But they behaved as people fearing God; as seriously as the poor ploughmen.

“ Sunday 10. I preached at Astbury, at five: and at seven, proclaimed at Congleton-cross, *Jesus Christ, our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* It rained most of the time that I was speaking. But that did not hinder abundance of people from quietly attending. Between twelve and one I preached near Macclesfield, and in the evening, at Woodley-green.

“ Monday 11. I preached at noon, about a mile from Ashton, and in the evening at Stahley-hall. Tuesday 12. I rode to Bongs, and explained to a serious people, the parable of the prodigal son. In the evening, I exhorted them at Chinley, *Earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints.*

“ Wednesday 13. I preached at noon, in the High-peak, and in the evening, at Sheffield.”*

“ The men of smooth tongue,” to whom Mr. Wesley refers, and who had injured the Societies at Roughlee and Widdap, appear to have been the same persons who had produced such serious effects in the Society with which John Maden was connected, in drawing them over to Antinomianism.—Roughlee, which is about three miles west of Colne, is one of those places in which there was a Society long before any existed in Colne.—At Keighley, the work must have been rather of an extraordinary character, and could not but produce a considerable sensation in the town; for upwards of ninety persons had joined the Society, in the space of ten

* Works vol. 29, p. 30-35.

months.—Stahley-hall, which has hitherto been stiled Stahley-hall, either through mistake of Mr. Wesley or his printer, appears to be an old Hall, connected with Staley-bridge, at which a pious family resided,—Davy-hulme, though not introduced by name at a much earlier period, is unquestionably one of the oldest Societies in the neighbourhood of Manchester. Mr. Wesley states, that “their neighbours used to disturb them”—that a magistrate granted a warrant—and that “from *that time* they” had enjoyed peace; all implying a considerable lapse of time.

The manner in which Manchester is noticed, and his conduct on the occasion, betoken some powerful feelings stirring within him, arising from certain associations. He does not appear to have remained in the town more than three hours and a half, the performance of divine service included; and though his avowed object was to visit the different Societies, yet he declares that he “Had no thought of preaching” in Manchester. He, like his brother Charles, recollected early days; and to him it was still more peculiarly painful, as Mr. Clayton had been lodged in his “Heart of hearts”—had been consulted by him—and received him into his home and into his pulpit the last time he visited the town. The very omission of Mr. Clayton’s name, seems to indicate a blank in some of the pages of friendship; while Mr. Wesley’s allusion to the past, at Salford-cross, must have inflicted a species of summary punishment upon the man, who, at a single stroke, could snap in twain the cords that had bound them together for years. It was, in short, a publication of the change which had been experienced; and, than its proclamation at the market-cross, not any thing could have afforded greater publicity.

Among the “quiet, loving people at *Booth-bank*,” there is one whom it would be improper not to notice. The account is copied from a manuscript in the hand-writing of Mr. Pawson, furnished by Mr. G. Marsden, and is as follows.

“That the grace of God can conquer the most stubborn sinner, and change the most deeply depraved heart, we have seen many proofs in this day of his visitation. Perhaps there never was a more remarkable witness of the goodness of God than Alice Cross; a woman well known to many people. She was a farmer’s wife, who lived at a lone house by the road side, at *Booth-bank*, not many miles from Manchester. This woman had before been a rude, uncultivated creature, but was brought to hear the Methodists, when they first visited that part of the country where she lived. She

was soon deeply awakened, and turned to God with her whole heart. Seeing herself a mere sinner, and having nothing to pay, she was soon made a happy partaker of the pardoning love of God; and having had much forgiven, she loved much. Being now made joyful in the Lord, she earnestly desired that others should be made participators of the same grace, which she so largely experienced. She first began with her husband, who was a man of the same character which she herself had been, as to religion; and as he was a total stranger, so he was an enemy to the truth. However, she was not to be hindered by him, do what he would. When it was time to go to preaching, she would take her straw hat in one hand and hold the door by the other, and would say, in her plain way, with all possible seriousness, 'John Cross, wilt thou go to heaven with me? If thou wilt not, I am determined not to go to hell with thee.' He was soon prevailed upon to go along with her, was truly awakened, soon brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and lived many years an uniform follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"They now gladly received the servants of God into their dwelling, had a pulpit fixed in their largest room, and had a church in their house for many, many years. A Society was formed, and Alice was made the leader of the class. She regularly visited all the sick in the neighbourhood, whether they sent for her or not. She would invite all the common beggars into the house, sit down beside them, solemnly warn them of their sin and danger, earnestly exhort them to seek the salvation of God, kneel down and pray with them, then relieve them according to her ability, and send them away. When the gentlemen came a hunting into the neighbourhood, she would take her hat, run after them, and in the plainest terms, tell them what would be the consequence, if they did not forsake their sinful ways. On her husband being made constable, she having far more courage than himself, he would send her to the constables' meetings. Methodism being held in the deepest contempt in those days, the gentlemen would frequently take very great liberties, in running out against those who professed it; but as she neither feared them, nor was at all ashamed of the truth, she soon put them all to silence.

"Alice had a sister exactly of the character of herself, before her conversion. She went to see her, and took abundance of pains to convince her of her sinful, lost, and ruined state. On finding that she could make her understand no-

thing, and that she could produce no good impression upon her heart, she then accosted the poor hardened creature in still plainer terms. She asked, 'Dost thou ever pray?' The sister said, 'Yes; what dost thou think?' 'How dost thou say thy prayers?' it was inquired. 'Dost thou say, Our Father, who art in hell? The devil is thy father, woman; for thou art doing his works, as Jesus Christ himself tells thee.'

"I had heard a good deal about Alice; and when I first went to the house, she was standing in the door-way. She was dressed exceedingly plain, but remarkably clean: and if I can form any just idea how a person would look, who had just come from the world of happy spirits, I should suppose that she very nearly resembled such an one; and more so, I seriously think, than any woman I ever yet saw in the whole course of my life. I said, 'I suppose I am come to the right place?' She replied. 'Yes, my dear, I trust you are; come in, my love, come in; and the Lord bless your coming amongst us.'

"When they happened to be disappointed of a preacher, she herself would occupy the pulpit. While hearing a sermon, I never saw her sit down. She took her stand beside the pulpit, and turned her face to the wall, so that she never saw who was there till the service was over. She was uniformly one of the most zealous, active, serious, and spiritually-minded women I was ever acquainted with; and that for a number of years, and at last died in a good old age, happy in the love of God."

Mr. Pawson first became acquainted with Alice Cross in 1765, when she was advanced both in grace and in years. The drawing with which we are presented is simple, and in some of its parts, approaching the picturesque. She appears to have been a subject from which an amplitude of character might have been struck out, and in the hands of one of our modern novelists—especially the magician of the north, would have constituted a heroine, and have afforded food for the imagination to revel in through the pages of two or three duodecimo volumes. But her character was too sacred for the sport of imagination; and truth, like the sun, is too pure and splendid, to admit of the flickerings of artificial light to add to its lustre. She fell into the hands of a man who had no imagination to indulge, who dealt in nothing but fact—and fact too, in its unadorned state; but the little that he has imparted, exhibits her to the view with all the decision and majesty of a Deborah; and though blended here and there with a degree of rusticity, yet it is the rusti-

city which is almost inseparable from the cottage and from the country, and is so happily tempered with genuine gospel simplicity, that we are involuntarily led back to patriarchal, rather than to more modern times, and seem to see Mr. Pawson—one of the angels or messengers of the churches, approaching the dwelling of Abraham, and Sarah standing at “the tent door” to bid him welcome. The renovating and transforming influence of the Spirit of God, seems to have effected as great a change in the family,—in their passing from nature to grace, from death to life, from the world to the church, as that which is experienced by the saint, in passing from earth to heaven—when all old things are done away, and every thing becomes new.

CHAPTER V.

Three Letters from the Rev. William Grimshaw to Mr. Wesley, comprising notices of the prosperity of the Work of God, Wm. Darney's Societies, Mr. Grimshaw's itinerancy, John Bennet, Mr. Perronet, Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Hutchinson, Parochial duties, the further extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, Mr. Carmichael, a pious clergyman, and an enumeration of the places visited in Lancashire and Cheshire.—Mr. Grimshaw's house opened for the reception of Methodist Preachers—Societies continuing to add to their numbers—a want of labourers in the vineyard—Brotherly love—an address to christian Societies—Rochdale and its neighbourhood—Thomas Mitchel, &c.

FROM the time that Mr. Wesley visited Haworth, in the month of May, which is the first notice of the kind, Mr. Grimshaw appears to have entered into a closer alliance with the Methodist body than before, and to have extended his field of labour. Of both his spirit and his exertions, together with the increasing state of the Societies, the following Letters to Mr. Wesley, will afford tolerable specimens.

LETTER I.

Haworth, May, 30, 1747.

Rev. and Dear Brother,

I hope this will find you in good health, and at hard but happy-making labour. O may the Lord give you sufficient strength of soul and body, as well as find employment in his vineyard, to the end. The work, I hope, prospers well in all those parts. The Societies you formed in William Darney's circuit, I hear are in a good state. I went amongst those about Todmorden, the week after you were there, and, to my great comfort, found it so. I likewise observed a general disposition in all sorts to hear the gospel. I exhorted twice that day; for I will not have it called preaching. I afterwards gave a short exhortation to a few, who happened to come too late to hear either of the former. I then took leave, and came away about seven in the evening. I lay that night at a friend's house, about six miles from Todmorden,

in the road to Halifax. Next morning, about half a mile from thence, in the parish of Heptonstall, in which you also were; and, in my way home, at a friend's house, (to whom I had signified my intention two or three days before,) I was met, praised be God, by a great multitude. The house was so full, that one-third part, if not more, I think, stood out of doors. I stood just within the door threshold, for the convenience of all. I exhorted near an hour and a half. The Lord gave me great freedom and power. These were as attentive, serious, and civil as those the day before.

At my coming home, I met with a letter from a Clergyman, about fourteen or fifteen miles from hence, and not above two or three from that place where you preached in Rossendale, before you set off to Manchester. He desired me to come and preach at his Chapel, on the morrow. I embraced the request, finding freedom in my heart, perceiving that a door is hereby opened, and that the Lord seems to make my way plain before me. I propose to set out to-day at noon, and to walk it, having an agreeable friend to bear me company. I know the Lord is with me.

William Darney desires a particular letter from you respecting his going into Scotland. He would go soon after Whitsuntide, if you think proper. I shall see him I hope to-morrow, as also Mr. Bennet, who will both be at the Chapel I am going to; and I intend that one or both of them shall preach at noon near the same place.

Last Lord's day I received a letter from one Mr. Perronet, at Mrs. Holme's, desiring to see me last Monday there; but I could not conveniently go. I suppose he is gone. However, this week, I rode to Mrs. Holme's, assuring her, with the Lord's leave, that I would next wait upon her. I hope we shall remember you with pleasure. I had Mr. Hutchinson and his sister, from Leeds, here the last Lord's day. I hear a comfortable account from the Lord's people in those parts also. I hope you meet with all things well wherever you come. You will not fail to present my tender respects to your brother: the same I desire to all the sincere servants and seekers of the blessed Jesus, your Redeemer and mine. O may we be kept faithful to him to the end: may we ever go forth in his strength, incessantly making mention, yea, loudly proclaiming his righteousness only; indefatigably labouring to glorify him in our hearts, lips, and lives, which are his, and continually endeavouring to bring innumerable sons and daughters to glory by him. This week two members of our Society, a married man and woman, are gone to rest with

this precious Lord. Blessed be his name. To him I heartily commend you and yours. Lord Jesus, sweet Jesus, be with you. I am, dearest Sir,

Your unworthy, but affectionate younger brother,
WILLIAM GRIMSHAW.

LETTER II.

Ewood, Aug. 20, 1747.

Rev. and very Dear Brother,

Wherever these lines find you, may they find you full of the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, fighting, in the strength of our Lord, the good fight of faith, pulling down the strong holds of Satan, and industriously labouring to deliver multitudes of poor sin-slaved souls out of the kingdom of darkness, into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God! Such success let us daily and heartily beseech our dear Redeemer to bless all his faithful ministers with, wherever he sends them. You will desire to know how I do, O, dear Sir, hearty and happy in the Lord; and how my ministry, or, rather, the present state of my parish. Blessed be God, flourishing still more and more; our Societies are, in general, very lively in the Lord; and several others, though not as yet joined in society, are nevertheless come to a sense of the pardoning love of God; others are under deep concern, or eagerly hungering and thirsting after our Redeemer. Two under my own roof are just now under true conviction; one a girl about eighteen years old, and the other, a boy about fourteen; and, I hope, my own little girl, between ten and eleven years old. It is near six months since she first began to shew a serious concern for her sinful state.

The method which I, the least and most unworthy of my Lord's ministers, take in my parish, is this; I preach the gospel, glad tidings of salvation, to penitent sinners, through faith in Christ's blood only, twice every Lord's day the year round, (save when I expound the Church Catechism, and thirty-nine Articles, or read the Homilies, which, in substance, I think my duty to do in some part of the year annually on the Lord's day mornings). I have found this practice, I bless God, of inexpressible benefit to my congregation, which consists, especially in the summer season, of perhaps ten or twelve hundred; or, as some think, many more souls. We have also prayers, and a chapter expounded every Lord's-day evening. I visit my parish in twelve several places monthly, convening six, eight, or ten families, in each place, allowing

any people of the neighbouring parishes that please to attend that exhortation. This I call my monthly visitation. I am now entering into the fifth year of it, and wonderfully, dear Sir, has the Lord blessed it. The only thing more, are our funeral expositions or exhortations, and visiting our societies in one or other of the three last days of every month. This I purposed, through the grace of God, to make my constant business in my parish, so long as I live.

But, O dear Sir, I know not what to say ; I know not what to do. Sometimes I have made more excursions into neighbouring parishes, to exhort, but always with a Nicodemical fear, and to the great offence of the clergy, which, till lately, almost made me resolve to sally out no more, but content myself in my own bounds : till lately, I say ; for on Wednesday was six weeks, from about five o'clock in the afternoon, to about twelve at night, and again for some hours together, I may say, the day following, my mind was deeply affected with strong impressions to preach the gospel abroad : the event I left to the Lord, fearing to be disobedient to what, I trust, was the heavenly call. The first thing suggested to me, was, to visit William Darney's Societies ; I accordingly met one of them about a month ago. Last week I struck out into Lancashire and Cheshire, Mr. Bennet bearing me company. We visited the societies in Rochdale, Manchester, and Holme, in Lancashire, and Booth-bank, in Cheshire. At the same time we made a visit to Mr. Carmichael, a clergyman at Tarvin, near Chester. He says, he received remission of sins last September ; and, I believe, preaches the same truth to his people.

From thence we came back by Booth-bank to Manchester, visited the Society a second time, and there we parted. I called and spent a part of two days with William Darney's Societies, particularly those in Todmorden, Shore, Mellerbarn, Rossendale, Bakup, Crostone, Stoneshawfate, Crimsworth-dean ; every where the Lord was manifestly with us : great blessings were scattered, and much zeal and love, with great humility and simplicity, appeared in most people every where. The whole visit found me employed for near five days. O it was a blessed journey to my soul ! I now, in some measure, begin to see the import of our Lord's design, by that deep impression upon my mind above-mentioned. I am determined, therefore, to add, by the divine assistance, to the care of my own parish, that of so frequent a visitation of Mr. Bennet's, William Darney's, the Leeds and Birstal Societies, as my own convenience will permit, and their cir-

cumstances may respectively seem to require, all along eyeing the Lord's will and purposes for me. If I find the Lord's pleasure be, that I must still launch out further, I will obey; for he daily convinces me more and more what he has graciously done, and will do, for my soul. O! I can never do enough in gratitude and in love to him, for the least mite, if I may reverently so speak, of what his blessings are to me. O, dear Sir, that I may prove faithful and indefatigable in his vineyard! that I may persevere to the last gasp steadfast, immoveable, and always abounding in his work! Do you pray—the same shall be mine for you, your dear brother, and all our fellow-labourers.

What I purpose concerning surveying the abovesaid Societies, as I have great cause to believe it is the Lord's will, from the freedom I feel thereto in my heart, so I question not but it will be agreeable to your conception of it. I desire to do nothing but in perfect harmony and concert with you, and therefore beg you will be entirely free, open, and communicative, to me. I bless God, I can discover no other at present, but every way a perfect agreement between your sentiments, principles, &c. of religion, and my own; and therefore desire you will, (as I do to you) from time to time, lay before me such rules, places, proposals, &c. as you conceive mostly conducive to the welfare of the church, the private benefit of her members, and, in the whole, to the glory of the Lord. My pulpit, I hope, shall be always at your's, and your brother's service; and my house, so long as I have one, your welcome home. The same I'll make it to all our fellow-labourers, through the grace of God.

Please to wink at the faults you meet with in this long, incoherent ramble; and assure yourself,

I am, your affectionate, but very unworthy Brother,
in the Lord,

WILLIAM GRIMSHAW.

LETTER III.

Ewood, Nov. 27, 1747.

Rev. and very dear Brother,

Your's, bearing date the 20th of this month, I yesterday received. I answer again, and by the length of my letter it will appear, I answer not in haste; though I must assure you, I have as little leisure for writing, as any thing I do. The want of preachers here at present is very great. That the harvest, in these parts, is really large, and the labourers

but very few, is very manifest: why it is so perhaps the Lord of it only knows. Indeed, you, in some sort, assign a reason for it. But, dear Sir, are there such plenty of helpers in Cornwall? Send us one or two of them, without further entreaty.

You desire a particular account of the progress of the Lord's work here. Indeed, I have the pleasure of assuring you, that I think it never went better, from its first appearance amongst us, than it has done within these two months. I may say, at Leeds, Birstal, Keighley, Todmorden, Rosendale, Heptonstall, Pendleforest, and in my own parish, the Societies are very hearty; souls are daily added to the church; and, I may say, multitudes, on all sides, (many of whom have been enemies to us and our Master's cause,) are convinced of the truth, run eagerly to hear the gospel, and (as I told you in my last) are continually crying out for more preachers. New and numerous classes have been lately joined. Were not matters thus with us, you may easily suppose I should not be so urgent with you for assistance. I think my public exhortations (alias what I call my monthly visitations) in my parish, were never so visibly blessed, I praise God, for these four years past, as they have been within these two last months. Such a mighty presence of God has been in those visitations, and also in many of our weekly class-meetings, as I have rarely seen before. This evening I am venturing, by the divine assistance, upon a public exhortation in a wild, unchristian place, called Midgley, four miles west from Halifax, where, of late, I have a great part of my residence; and I hope my attempt will have the Lord on my side.

I hope brother Bennet fails not to inform you, how well the work of grace flourishes in Derbyshire, Cheshire, and in the south of Lancashire, particularly about Bolton, Chowbent, &c. Mr. Lunelle (whose wife has lately experienced the pardoning love of God) wrote me a delightful account of the state of the church at Leeds. Thus much of my incoherent relation of our Lord's work in these parts.

Brother Bennet, Nelson, and I, not only, I hope, love as brethren, but are cordially united in carrying on the Lord's work. I hope we believe, and profess, and preach, one thing—JESUS and HIM crucified. If you know them, you know me. About three weeks since brothers Nelson and Colbeck were all night with me. Before then I accidentally met with brother Bennet at Bank, near Heptonstall, where I went to meet all the Heptonstall parish classes. Last

week I met brother Colbeck, and all the Keighley parish classes: and about six weeks ago I visited those of Leeds and Birstal: about a month since, those of Todnorden, Shore, and some of Rossendale.

Dear Sir, I beg you will present my hearty respects to all your societies, classes, &c. in London, or elsewhere, in the following manner:

1. To believers. Dear souls, I frequently have you in my thoughts, and wonder how your hearts are disposed towards our Saviour. Do you still continue fervent in spirit, serving the Lord? Is he still the most precious, the more you experience of his grace? Or, like the ungrateful Israelites, which, God forbid, do you begin to loathe the heavenly manna? Sure, the more you feel by faith the virtue of the blood and righteousness of our dear Saviour, the more you are filled with the love of God, and the sweet consolations of the Holy Ghost. For, as our Lord truly affirms, the kingdom of heaven is within you; so that kingdom is asserted by St. Paul, to be righteousness, (and then) peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The more therefore you feel of this, the more will you rejoice, and the more will you hunger and thirst thereafter. Which if you do, "Blessed are you, says our Lord, for you shall be filled." Loath would I think, but that this is the disposition of your hearts, who have received the pardoning love of God our Saviour. O may you be affected with an insatiable appetite for a Saviour's graces, daily more and more. How will the for-ever-blessed THREE rejoice to see it, and rejoice to satisfy it. Therefore, "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find." The more you enjoy of God's grace, the more will he endue you therewith. He gives plentifully and upbraideth no man. "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance." God's treasury never fails, how much soever goes out of it. Nor doth he ever tire with giving; if you never tire with asking, and carefully improve what he gives. O may you receive abundantly at this all-bounteous hand, and may you never fail, nor faint, whilst breath lasts, to improve it to the donor's glory, and your own everlasting benefit!

2. To seekers: and supposing some of you are but yet seeking the Lord, and have never felt his pardoning love, nor the joy which follows: supposing you are mourning under the load of sin, or panting for a deliverance through a Saviour: courage, dear souls, and despair not. He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The bruised reed he will not break; the smoking flax he will not quench. No,

no, he has wounded you, on purpose to bind you up. To you he has made a promise. Blessed are you that mourn, for ye shall be comforted. This holy David well knew. Psalm cxvi. "Come unto me," cries our Lord, "all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What though you cannot as yet with children, cry, *Abba Father*; though with them you as yet perceive not yourselves, set down to the full meal of your heavenly Father's table; though you may think you are looked upon at present but as dogs, as indeed what are any of us better by nature, than dogs living upon our vomits? Yet, with the Syro-Phœnecian woman, think well to be called dog, (sincere contrition for sins will readily bear the name) and then have you hereby a title to the crumbs which fall from your master's table. Claim but the dog's portion; beg to live under the table, and then shall you shortly partake of the children's loaf. A broken and contrite heart he will not despise, Psalm li. 17. You shall quickly hear your Master say, as he did to the woman; O my precious mourning souls! "Great is your faith! Be it unto you (mark the next words) even as thou wilt!"

To him I heartily commend you all, being one, who have, I trust, received grace, and am determined, through my Saviour's never-failing assistance, to live and die in his service; as, I hope, you all are, or else woe be to you.

WILLIAM GRIMSHAW.

No greater evidence is necessary to confirm the truth of the statement, which professes to constitute the Vicar of Haworth an *Assistant* to Mr. Wesley, than his own language, where he observes, "I desire to do nothing but in perfect harmony and concert with you;" and then proceeds to state his readiness to submit to such "proposals"—to walk by "such rules"—and to be directed to such "places," as Mr. Wesley might "conceive most conducive to the welfare of the church, &c."

Another important point in Methodism, which has been slightly adverted to, but which deserves more ample attention, is the establishment of "Weekly class-meetings," which Mr. Grimshaw, in another instance, styles "Parish-Classes." They were not barely *Societies* that were established, but those *Societies* were divided into *Classes*, and the members of these *Classes* were again formed into *Bands*, while the *Bands* themselves were distinguished by the epithets of *Public* and *Select*; thus forming a beautiful assemblage of hallowed circles—one enclosed within another—and each in-

creasing in sanctity of character in proportion to its narrowing approach to the centre. The plan adopted for the admission of members has always been distinguished for its simplicity, as well as creditably supported by authority. When a candidate is proposed for christian communion, he is received *on trial*, in which probationary state he remains for the space of two or three months. If approved of at the termination of this period, he is then admitted as a member, and receives a printed ticket, with his name written upon it, together with the name or initials of the Preacher by whom it is presented. This "Society Ticket" bears an analogy, and is given for a similar purpose to that of the "Commendatory letters" of the primitive church.* These were "called by Tertullian, *the communication of peace, the title of brotherhood, and the common mark of hospitality*: by virtue whereof, they were admitted to communicate in all the churches through which they passed," either when on a journey, or during a short residence from home.†

When Mr. Grimshaw speaks of "the Societies in Rochdale," he unquestionably refers to the Societies in the neighbourhood; and one of the places which he visited, but which is not named by him, was Knowsley. It appears from a M.S. account lying before the writer, and furnished by Mr. Geo. Haworth of Trough, still living (1827), that it was the scene of early labour. Referring to the Sketch he had drawn up, he remarks, "This small and imperfect account does not pretend to interfere with the affairs of Rochdale and Bacup, as it respects early Methodism, but only with a short tract of country between Bacup and Wardle, comprising a space of about six miles; and what I write, is not only what I have heard from my ancestors, but is the result of personal knowledge. Shawford may be considered as in the centre. Mr. Grimshaw visited a house called Knowsley, near Shawford, which was occupied by a person of the name of Robert Heyworth. This was about the year 1747. Among others who preached at the place were Wm. Darney, Paul Greenwood, Jonathan Maskew, and Thomas Mitchell—all from Yorkshire. The place is considered to be about the centre of England, and the house itself stood high on one of the Lancashire mountains. Bad as the roads were, and rough as the weather might be in winter, these servants of the Lord were

* 2 Cor. 3. 1.

† Lord King's History of the Creed, with critical Notes: Art. Com. of Saints, p. 345, third edit.

sure to be at their work early on a Sunday morning, preaching with a zeal for which the first race of Methodist Preachers were so remarkable. To Robert Heyworth and his son-in-law, James Haworth, the word of God proved effectual to the conversion of their souls. The former removed some years afterwards to the neighbourhood of Todmorden, and the latter to the neighbourhood of Bacup. James died in peace in 1768; and his funeral sermon was preached by Mr. George Hudson. There was another good man, with whom I was personally acquainted, of the name of James Cawcroft, whose brother was a Local Preacher, who received saving benefit under the ministry of the word. Some years after the Methodists had obtained footing in Shawford, the work declined, and the place was nearly deserted."

Thomas Mitchell, who entered the vineyard as an additional labourer about this period, was born in the parish of Bingley, in Yorkshire, December 3, 1726. His parents were religiously disposed, and both died in the faith. The fear of God was implanted in his heart from childhood, and he laboured under deep convictions when only five years of age. But as he advanced in life, his mind became more obtuse in reference to divine things; till at length, in the time of the Rebellion, he enlisted into the Yorkshire Blues, among whom he met with a good man, who, by the advice he administered, renewed the awakenings of spirit which had been experienced in earlier days. The following extracts from his life, will in some measure connect with the range of country, which this work professes to embrace.

"In the year 1746," he observes, "the rebellion being over, we were discharged. I then sought for a people that feared God, and joined the Society. I heard John Nelson several times, and began to have some hope of finding mercy: some time after I went to hear Mr. Grimshaw, and was convinced that we were to be saved by faith; yea, that the very worst of sinners might be saved, by faith in Jesus Christ. Soon after, I heard Mr. Charles Wesley preach from these words, *I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified*. He shewed clearly, that Christ is able and willing to save the greatest sinners. I was much refreshed under the sermon.—But when he told us, we might know our sins forgiven in this life; yea, this very moment, it seemed to me new doctrine, and I could not believe it at all. But I continued in prayer; and in a few days, I was convinced of it to my great joy. The love of Christ broke into my soul, and drove away all

guilt and fear: and at the same time he filled my heart with love both to God and man. I saw that God was my salvation, and now could trust him, and praise him with joyful lips.

“Soon after this, Mr. John Wesley came to Bradforth, and preached on, *This one thing I do*. He joined several of us together in a Class, which met about a mile from the town. But all of them fell back and left me alone; yet afterward some of them returned. Before this, I thought my hill was so strong, that I could never be moved. But seeing so many fall into sin, I began to see danger in my way. I began to feel an evil heart of unbelief, and was fully convinced, that there must be a farther change in my heart, before I could be established in grace. Afterward I removed to Keighley, and had many opportunities of hearing, and profiting by Mr. Grimshaw. But feeling my corruptions, with strong temptations, I fell into great doubtings. I was almost in despair, full of unbelief. I could scarce pray at all. I was in this state near half a year, finding no comfort in any thing. But one evening, one of our friends prayed in the Society, and my soul was set at liberty. All my doubts fled away, and faith and love once more sprung up in my heart. I afterward saw, that God had a farther end in these trials and deliverances.

“Not long after this, I felt a great desire to tell others what God had done for my soul. I wanted my fellow creatures to turn to the Lord, but saw myself utterly unfit to speak for him. I saw the neighbourhood, in which I lived, abounding with all manner of wickedness. And no man caring for their souls, or warning them to flee from the wrath to come, I began to reprove sin wherever I was, though many hated me for so doing. I did not regard that; for God gave me an invincible courage. But still I did not see clearly, whether I was called to speak in public, or no. After many reasonings in my mind, I ventured to give notice of a meeting. When the time came my soul was bowed down within me; my bones shook, and one knee smote against the other. I had many to hear me: some of them heard me with pain, and advised me to speak no more in public. But one young woman was convinced of her lost condition, and never rested till she found redemption.”

After an account of the persecutions he sustained, his journeying from place to place in quest of employment, and stating that he “Wrought diligently at his business through the day, and in the evenings called sinners to repentance,”

he proceeds to remark, "From Leeds I went to Birstall. It happened to be their preaching night. John Nelson was sick in bed, so the people desired me to preach or give them a word of exhortation. Accordingly I preached in the best manner I could, and the people seemed well satisfied. The next day I went to High Town, and preached to a large congregation in the evening. I had much liberty in speaking, and found a great blessing to my own soul; and I have reason to believe the people were well satisfied.

"From Birstal I went to Heptonstall. Here I met with a lively people who received me very kindly. I gave several exhortations among them, and the word went with power to many hearts. I continued some time in these parts, and went to several places in Lancashire. Here also I found many were awakened, and several found peace with God, while I was among them. I endeavoured to form a regular Circuit in these parts, and in a little time gained my point.

"I continued in these parts some time, and have reason to hope that I was useful among them. In one place I met with a mob of women, who put me into a pond of water, which took me nearly over my head. But by the blessing of God, I got out safe, and walked about three miles in my wet cloaths, but I caught no cold. I continued some time in these parts, encouraged by the example and advice of good Mr. Grimshaw.

"One time, Paul Greenwood and I called at his house together, and he gave us a very warm exhortation, which I shall not soon forget. He said, "If you are sent of God to preach the gospel, all hell will be up in arms against you. Prepare for the battle, and stand fast in the good ways of God. Indeed you must not expect to gain much of this world's goods by preaching the gospel. What you get must come through the devil's teeth; and he will hold it as fast as he can. I count every covetous man, to be one of the devil's teeth. And he will let nothing go, for God and his cause, but what is forced from him."*

In the year 1751, T. Mitchell gave himself entirely up to the work of the christian ministry, and was appointed to labour in Lincolnshire.

* Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 214.

CHAPTER VI.

Stockport and its neighbourhood—John Oliver—Miss Simpson—Robert Anderton—John Appleton—Mrs. Smallwood—Facit—Halifax—Haworth and its vicinity—Messrs. Wesley and Grimshaw—Violent opposition at Colne, and in various adjacent places—The Rev. George White preaches and publishes a Sermon against the Methodists, encourages the mob, his character, and works—Mr. Wesley's letter on the conduct and proceedings of the rioters—He pursues his journey to Manchester, and preaches in the neighbouring towns—Bolton—Dr. Taylor—A singular account of a young woman—J. Bennet—Hayfield—Bongs—Effects of a great rain—Jonathan Catlow—Todmorden.

THOUGH the Society at Woodley, and other places around Stockport and Manchester, must have sustained a serious loss in the removal of Robert Swindels, who was now an *Assistant Preacher*,* the Divine Being was mercifully summoning others forth to supply his lack of service. Among those who were under divine influence, and who afterwards occupied a prominent station in the Wesleyan body, was John Oliver. He was born in Stockport, in 1732; and till the fifteenth or sixteenth year of his age, continued the subject of occasional deep convictions and vicious practices. Conceiving an inveterate prejudice against the Methodists, and having some personal knowledge of one of them, he laboured with boyish ardour to convince him, that Methodism, as a religious system, was radically bad, and that its professors were enemies to the Established Church. His acquaintance, however, was not long in convincing *him* of his own destitution of personal piety; and the consequence was, that he avoided every approach to him afterwards. His conscience, in the mean time, being but ill at rest, he was led to an abandonment of his profane sports and associates, and an attendance on the service of the Establishment; enjoining on himself a repetition of its collects and of its prayers, and the duty of

* Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 58.

religious fasting. In this way he proceeded for some time; and as his personal history is interwoven with the history of the infant Society in Stockport, it will be proper to enter into some detail.

He observes, after ceasing to listen to the arguments and expostulations of his companions in vice, "I read, prayed, fasted, went to Church, and seemed more and more resolved, till, after a few months, several young men of my acquaintance came from Manchester on the Lord's day, to an inn just opposite to our house, and sent over for *me*. My father pressing me to go, I went; only resolving not to stay long. But I soon forgot this, and all my good resolutions. When I came home at night, I was in agony. I did not dare to pray. My conscience stared me in the face; and the terror I felt was inconceivable.

"It was soon spread abroad, that I was melancholy. A neighbour, who was a hearer of the Methodists sent me word there was to be preaching that night. My father declared, 'If I went he would knock my brains out, though he should be hanged for it.' However, I stole away. The preacher was John Appleton, who invited *all that were weary and heavy laden, to come to Jesus*. It was balm to my soul. I drank it in with all my heart, and began to seek God as I had not done before. Till now, I thought of saving *myself*. My cry now was, 'Lord, save or I perish.' Yet I knew not how to go on, till one sent me word, there was a person at her house who would be glad to see me. It was Miss Simpson. She told me the manner of her conversion to God. She sung an hymn, and went to prayer. I was all in a flame to know these things for myself. As soon as I got home, I went to prayer, and pleaded the merits of Christ. Suddenly, I thought I heard a clear voice, saying, 'Son! thy sins which are many, are forgiven.' I cried out, 'Lord, if this be from thy Spirit, let the words be applied with power.' Instantly I heard a second time, 'Son, thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee.' In an instant all my load was gone, and I felt such a change as cannot be expressed. I loved God: I loved all mankind. I could not tell whether I was in the body or out of it. Prayer was turned into wonder, love, and praise.

"In this happy state I remained for several months, feeling nothing in my heart but love. Yet I wanted some agreeable companions; and I *thought over* all the people I knew. I could not recollect any of our Church that were such as I wanted: no, nor among the Dissenters or Quakers. The

last people I thought of were the Methodists; I found my soul united to them: I took an opportunity of asking one of them, Robert Anderton, 'What are the terms of admission among them?' He told me, 'These:' putting the rules of the Society into my hands, and desiring me to read and consider them. Having done this, I told him, There was one rule which I was afraid I could not keep: 'Meeting every week:' but I would meet as often as I could. So I joined the Society in the year 1748.

"I was now tried in a manner I had not been before. My father was a man of a violent temper: and as much as he loved me, his anger quickly overcame his natural affection. He sent to all the Methodists, threatening what he would do, if any of them dared to receive me into their houses. Several gentlemen of the town, advised him to proceed to more severe methods. He did so, frequently breaking sticks, and sometimes chairs, upon me. When all this did not move me, he tried another way, charging me with disobedience, and telling me I had broke his heart, and would bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

"Several clergymen then called upon me, and strove to shew me the Methodists were in the wrong. One of them was Mr. Dale, lately my master, who called me his child, prayed for me, wept over me, and conjured me, if I loved my own soul, not to go near those people any more. My father promised before Mr. Dale, I should go to Church prayers every day, and have every indulgence I could wish, provided I would come no 'more near those d—ned villains.' I told him, I would do every thing in my power, as a child to a parent, to oblige him: but this was a thing that affected my conscience, which therefore, I could not give up.

"Our Society was now much united together, and did indeed love as brethren. Some of them had just began to meet in band, and invited me to meet with them. Here, one of them speaking of the wickedness of his heart, I was greatly surprised; telling them, I felt no such things, my heart being kept in peace and love all the day long. But it was not a week before I felt the swelling of pride, and the storms of anger and self-will: so when I met again, I could speak the same language with them. We sympathized with each other, prayed for each other, and believed God was both able and willing to purify our hearts from all sin.*"

It is in what is thus related by John Oliver, that we have

* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 417.421.

the first *published* account of a Methodist Society in Stockport. He connects with his leaving School, the introduction of Methodism, and says, "The Methodists, so called, then coming to Stockport, I was greatly prejudiced against them :—" and in 1748, which was the period of his union with the body, there was *preaching*, a *Society*, and a *Band*. By uniting the researches of Mr. Abel Wilson to those of Mr. Rigg, the former of which have been furnished in M. S. and the latter published in the Wesleyan Magazine,* the reader will have something like solid ground upon which to rest his faith. It is conjectured that John Bennet was the first that preached the gospel in Stockport, as a Methodist preacher. Mrs. Smallwood, or Small, a widow, was the first person who received these messengers of mercy into her house. She occupied part of a house which, at that time, was called Petty Carr Hall; and it was there that a small class was formed, which was placed under the care of Robert Anderton; the class supposed to be referred to by John Oliver. Of Robert Anderton, but little can be learned, especially at this period of the history. Till about 1752, when some particular circumstances gave a greater prominence to his character, he seems only to have been known by name and in office. In addition to the Class-meeting at Mrs. Smallwood's, the Society had a Prayer-meeting, at nine o'clock in the morning, and at five in the evening; and on the Sabbath day, preaching, occasionally, at one in the afternoon. The intermediate hours, on the Lord's day, were devoted to an attendance on the service of the Established Church.—John Appleton, whom John Oliver was invited to hear, is classed by Mr. Myles among the Local Preachers;† and as he is neither to be found in the Chronological List of Travelling Preachers, in the Minutes of Conference, nor in Mr. Atmore's Memorial, it is reasonable to suppose that he only acted in that capacity. The familiarity, indeed, with which he is introduced in the Memoir, in which his name stands—as "*John Appleton*," when contrasted with the more respectful term—"Mr. *Jaco*," the latter of whom is known to have been a Travelling Preacher, would lead to such conclusion: and if so, the sorrow of the people on the removal of Robert Swindels, must have been considerably alleviated by a permanent and seasonable supply.

When Methodism obtained an introduction to any particular place, however diminutive or obscure, it was not long,

* For Jan. 1827, p. 21.

† Chron. Hist. p. 58.

according to the diffusive qualities of which it is composed, before it was extended to others—and extended to them, either because of their contiguity to the original spot of visitation, or because of family relationship among its professors. Thus it passed from Woodley to Stockport; and some consanguineous claims might be established between “Robert Anderton,” of Stockport, and “Mr. Anderton, of Northwich.”

Shawford was on the list of newly visited places, in the course of the preceding year, and Facit, now in the Haslingden Circuit, appears as a Methodist station in the course of this: and it was introduced here before it had either reached Haslingden or Bury,—and what is as remarkable as it is creditable, it was never known to have received, in this place, the smallest riotous opposition. Paul Greenwood was the first who opened the Wesleyan Commission in the place,—and he opened it by announcing as his text, “This day is salvation come to this house.” He was invited and entertained by a person of the name of Edward Hill. On the death of Edward, the Preachers were received by his son James, who, together with his wife, inherited the excellent properties of the father, and were both interred on the same day. After their decease, the congregation was scattered for a season, but again collected, and the Preachers entertained by Edward and Alice Leach, the son-in-law and daughter of James Hill, whose children, in their turn, continue to tread in the steps of their forefathers to the present day; so that for the space of 79 years, and by four successive generations, the Methodist Preachers have been received into the same house.

Travelling N. N. E. we shall find the state of things assuming a threatening aspect at Colne. Mr. Wesley’s periodical visits were generally anticipated a considerable time before-hand by the people; and the better to prepare the mob-forces for his reception, the Rev. George White preached a sermon against the Methodists, which was afterwards published* with an “Epistle Dedicatory, to the Most Reverend;

* It was with great difficulty that a copy could be obtained; and for this the writer is indebted to the industry of the Rev. Thomas Eastwood. The copy has the autograph of “John Smith,” bearing date of the year of its publication, and at the close, written by the same beautiful hand, “Zeal, if misguided, is pernicious.”—This specimen of pulpit eloquence is entitled; by its Author, “A SERMON against the METHODISTS, Preached at COLNE and MARSDEN, in the county of Lancaster, to a very numerous audience; at Colne, July 24, and at Marsden, Aug. 7, 1748. By GEORGE WHITE, M. A. Minister of Colne and Marsden, and Author of Mercurius Latinus. Published at the Request of the Audience. PRESTON: Printed for the Author, by James Stanley and John Moon; and sold by W. Owen, near Temple-Bar, London, and the Booksellers of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northumberland, and the Bishoprick of Durham.” 8vo. p. 24. The Author has appended to the Sermon a list of his other publications, which it may be a matter of curiosity to preserve.

his Grace, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury," dated from Colne, November 7th, 1748. To enter into a lengthened refutation of the errors and intellectual monstrosities founded on 1 Cor. 14. 33, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints," would be a folly at this distance of time. A brief notice of the personal History of this Protestant theologian, will prepare the reader for a ready reception of every thing stated by Mr. Wesley.

Dr. Whitaker observes, that "George White, A. M. was educated at Doway, for orders in the Church of Rome, but, upon his recantation, was noticed by Archbishop Potter, who recommended him to the Vicar of Whalley. He was the translator of Thurlow's Letters into Latin, and the editor of a newspaper called the *Mercurius Latinus*: a man neither devoid of parts nor literature, but childishy ignorant of common life, and shamefully inattentive to his duty, which he frequently abandoned for weeks together to such accidental assistance as the parish could procure. On one occasion, he is said to have read the funeral service more than twenty times in a single night, over the dead bodies which have been interred in his absence. With these glaring imperfections in his own character, he sought to distinguish himself by a riotous opposition to the Methodists, then almost an infant sect, who took advantage, as might be expected, of his absence and misconduct, under the direction of Mr. Grimshaw, an earnest sincere man, of whom I have so good an opinion as to believe that, had he lived till now to see the consequence of those eccentricities in which he allowed himself, he would have altered his conduct, and contented himself with a better-regulated zeal.*"

Without stopping to obviate what appeared objectionable to the worthy Dr., in the "advantage" of which the Methodists availed themselves, or the "eccentricities" of Mr. Grimshaw, a further developement of the conduct of Mr. White, will shew the *advantages* to which they were entitled, by his own voluntary surrender of character to all the obliquity that could be heaped upon it. Dr. Potter, who

"The following Books written by the Rev. George White, A. M.

"The *Englishman's* Rational Proceedings in the Choice of Religion. A Sermon preached at *St. Giles's, Durham*, 1741, against Popery and Presbyterianism. *Pemberton*.

"The Miraculous Sheep's Eye, at *St. Victor's*, in *Paris*. A Burlesque Poem, against the Veneration of reliques, 1743. *Marshall*.

"The High-Mass. A Burlesque Poem, 1747. *Hart, Poppin's-alley, Fleet-street*. Price 6d.

"*Mercurius Latinus*: In 31 Numbers. *Faden, Salisbury-court, Fleet-street*.

"Theological Remarks on the Reverend Dr. *Middleton's* late *Introductory Discourse and Postscript*: With some Hints relating to his other Works. *Owen*."

* History of Whalley, p. 398.

recommended Mr. White, had a very different subject in hand, when he ordained Mr. Wesley a Deacon in 1725, and a Priest in 1728. The career of the two men was widely different; and though they both *itinerated*, they had distinct objects in view. Mr. White itinerated for pleasure; and after one of his excursions, he made his appearance with a Madame Hellen Maria Piarza, an Italian governante, whom he married at Marsden, March 23rd, 1744--5.* He had not been long from the hymeneal altar before a temporary separation took place, occasioned by his incarceration for debt; and no sooner was he released from prison, than every previously indulged and vitiated habit revived. At the time he preached his celebrated sermon, his animosity towards Methodism seems to have attained its acme; and the people who could "*request*" its publication, must have acquired a state of considerable fermentation. As the time approached for Mr. Wesley's appearance, the more formidable were the preparations for his repulsion. To such a state of degradation had the minister of Colne lowered himself, that he actually issued forth a "Proclamation for inlisting men into the mob raised against the Methodists, which ran in words to the following effect:

"Notice is hereby given, that if any men be mindful to inlist into his Majesty's service, under the command of the Rev. Mr. Geo. White, Commander in Chief, and John Banister, Lieut. General of his Majesty's forces, for the defence of the Church of England, and the support of the Manufactory in and about Colne, both which are now in danger, &c. &c., let them now repair to the drum-head at the Cross, where each man shall have a pint of ale for advance, and other proper encouragement."†

The intoxicating inducement at the close of the "Proclamation," confirms the words of Mr. Wesley, where he observes; "It was" Mr. White's "manner first to hire, and then head the mob, when they and he were tolerably drunk.‡" This Reverend Divine carried precisely the same materials into the Church of England of which he was composed when in the Church of Rome; and with the spirit which he breathed, and the "carnal" weapons which he employed, he would have made no inconsiderable figure under the

* Whitaker's Hist. of Whalley.

† Grimshaw's Answer to White's Sermon.

‡ Works, vol. 29, p. 215.

guidance of Bonner and Gardiner. Without detaining the reader any longer from a survey of the conflict that succeeded the Proclamation, he shall be presented with a circumstantial account from the pen of an eye-witness. Mr. Wesley observes,

“Sunday, Aug. 21, I preached as usual, at Leeds and Birstal. Monday 22. After preaching at Heaton, I rode to Skircoat green. Our brethren here were much divided in their judgment. Many thought I ought to preach at Halifax-cross. Others judged it to be impracticable; the very mention of it as a possible thing, having set all the town in an uproar. However, to the Cross I went. There was an immense number of people, roaring like the waves of the sea. But the far greater part of them were still, as soon as I began to speak. They seemed more and more attentive and composed; till a gentleman got some of the rabble together, and began to throw money among them, which occasioned much hurry and confusion. Finding my voice could not be heard, I made signs to the people, that I would remove to another place. I believe nine in ten followed me to a meadow, about half a mile from the town: where we spent so solemn an hour as I have seldom known, rejoicing and praising God.

“Tuesday 23rd. The congregation was larger at five in the morning, than it was in the evening when I preached here before. About one I preached at Baleden, and in the evening at Bradford, where none behaved indecently, but the curate of the parish.

“Wednesday 24th. At eight I preached at Ecclesal, and about one at Kighly. At five Mr. Grimshaw read prayers and I preached at Haworth, to more than the church could contain. We began the service in the morning at five. And even then the church was nearly filled.

“Thursday 25th. I rode with Mr. Grimshaw to Roughlee, where T. Colbeck, of Kighley, was to meet us. We were stopt again and again, and begged ‘Not to go on; for a large mob from Colne was gone before us.’ Coming a little farther, we understood they had not yet reached Roughlee. So we hastened on, that we might be there before them. All was quiet when we came. I was a little afraid for Mr. Grimshaw, but needed not. He was ready to go to prison or death for Christ’s sake.

“At half hour after twelve I began to preach. I had about half finished my discourse, when the mob came pouring down the hill like a torrent. After exchanging a few words with their Captain to prevent any contest, I went with him

as he required. When we came to Barrowford, two miles off, the whole army drew up in battle array before the house into which I was carried, with two or three of my friends. After I had been detained above an hour, their Captain went out and I followed him, and desired him to conduct me whence I came. He said, he would : but the mob soon followed after : at which he was so enraged, that he must needs turn back to fight them, and so left me alone.

“ A farther account is contained in the following letter, which I wrote the next morning.

“ *Widdop, Aug. 26, 1748.*

“ SIR,

“ Yesterday, between twelve and one o'clock, while I was speaking to some quiet people, without any noise or tumult, a drunken rabble came, with clubs and staves, in a tumultuous and riotous manner, the Captain of whom, Richard B. by name, said he was a deputy-constable, and that he was come to bring me to *you*. I went with him. But I had scarce gone ten yards, when a man of his company struck me with his fist in the face with all his might. Quickly after, another threw his stick at my head. I then made a little stand. But another of your champions, cursing and swearing in the most shocking manner, and flourishing his club over his head, cried out, ‘ Bring him away.’

“ With such a convoy I walked to Barrowford, where they informed me you was, their drummer going before, to draw all the rabble together from all quarters.

“ When your deputy had brought me into the house, he permitted Mr. Grimshaw, the Minister of Haworth, Mr. Colbeck of Kighley, and one more to be with me, promising, that none should hurt them. Soon after you and your friends came in, and required me to promise, ‘ I would come to Roughlee no more.’ I told you, I would sooner cut off my hand, than make any such promise. Neither would I promise, that none of my friends should come. After abundance of rambling discourse (for I could keep none of you long to any one point) from about one o'clock till between three and four (in which one of you frankly said, ‘ No, *we* will not be like Gamaliel ; we will proceed like the Jews,’) you seemed a little satisfied with my saying, ‘ I will not preach at Roughlee at this time.’—You then undertook to quiet the mob, to whom you went and spoke a few words, and their noise immediately ceased. I then walked out with you at the back-door.

"I should have mentioned, that I had several times before desired you to let me go, but in vain; and that when I attempted to go with Richard B. the mob immediately followed, with oaths, curses, and stones; that one of them beat me down to the ground; and when I rose again, the whole body came about me like lions, and forced me back into the house.

"While you and I went out at one door, Mr. Grimshaw and Mr. Colbeck went out at the other. The mob immediately closed them in, tost them to and fro with the utmost violence, threw Mr. Grimshaw down, and loaded them both with dirt and mire of every kind: not one of your friends offering to call off your blood-hounds from the pursuit.

"The other quiet, harmless people, who followed me at a distance, to see what the end would be, they treated still worse, not only by the connivance, but by the express order of your deputy. They made them run for their lives, amidst showers of dirt and stones, without any regard to age or sex. Some of them they trampled in the mire, and dragged by the hair, particularly Mr. Mackford, who came with me from Newcastle. Many of them they beat with their clubs without mercy. One they forced to leap down (or they would have thrown him headlong) from a rock, ten or twelve feet high, into the river. And when he crawled out wet and bruised, they swore they would throw him in again, which they were hardly persuaded not to do. All this time you sat well-pleased close to the place, not attempting in the least to hinder them.

"And all this time you was talking of justice and law! Alas, sir, suppose we were dissenters, (which I deny) suppose we were Jews or Turks, are we not to have the benefit of the laws of our country? Proceed against us by the law, if you can or dare; but not by lawless violence; not by making a drunken, cursing, swearing, riotous mob, both judge, jury, and executioner: This is flat rebellion against God and the king, as you may possibly find to your cost."

"Between four and five we set out from Roughlee. But observing several parties of men upon the hills, and suspecting their design, we put on and past the lane they were making for, before they came. One of our brothers, not riding so fast, was intercepted by them. They immediately knocked him down, and how it was that he got from amongst them, he knew not.

"Before seven we reached Widdop. The news of what had past at Barrowford, made us all friends. The person in whose house Mr. B. preached, sent and begged I would

preach there ; which I did at eight, to such a congregation as none could have expected on so short a warning. He invited us also to lodge at his house, and all jealousies vanished away.

“ Friday 26th. I preached at five to much the same congregation. At twelve we came to Heptenstall-bank. The house stands on the side of a steep mountain, and commands all the vale below. The place in which I preached was an oval spot of ground, surrounded with spreading trees, scooped out, as it were, in the side of the hill, which rose round like a theatre. The congregation was equal to that at Leeds ; but such serious and earnest attention ! It lifted up my hands, so that I preached as I scarce never did in my life.

“ About four, I preached again to nearly the same congregation, and God again caused the power of his love to be known. Thence we rode to Midgeley. Many flocked from all parts, to whom I preached till near an hour after sun-set. The calmness of the evening agreed well with the seriousness of the people ; every one of whom seemed to drink in the word of God, as a thirsty land the refreshing showers.

“ Sat. 27. I preached once more at seven to the earnest people at the Bank, and then rode to Todmorden-edge. Here several prisoners were set at liberty, as was Mr. Mackford the day before. At five I preached at Mellarburn in Rossendale. There were a few rude people ; but they kept at a distance, and it was well they did, or the awakened hearers would have been apt to handle them roughly. I observed here what I had not then seen, but at one single place in England. When I had finished my discourse, and even pronounced the blessing, not one person offered to go away : but every man, woman and child stayed just where they were, till I myself went away first.

“ Sund. 28. I was invited by Mr. U. the minister of Goodshaw, to preach in his church. I began reading prayers at seven ; but perceiving the church would scarce contain half of the congregation, after prayers I went out, and standing on the church-yard wall, in a place shaded from the sun, explained and enforced those words in the second lesson, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

“ I wonder at those, who still talk so loud of the *indecentcy* of field-preaching. The highest *indecentcy* is in St. Paul's church, when a considerable part of the congregation are asleep, or talking, or looking about, not minding a word the preacher says. On the other hand, there is the highest *decency* in a *church-yard* or *field*, when the whole congrega

tion behave and look, as if they saw the Judge of all, and heard him speaking from heaven.

“ At one, I went to the cross, in Bolton. There was a vast number of people, but many of them utterly wild. As soon as I began speaking, they began thrusting to and fro; endeavouring to throw me down from the steps on which I stood. They did so once or twice; but I went up again, and continued my discourse. They then began to throw stones; at the same time some got upon the cross, behind me, to push me down; on which I could not but observe, how God overrules even the minutest circumstances. One man was bawling just at my ear, when a stone struck him on the cheek, and he was still. A second was forcing his way down to me, till another stone hit him on the forehead; it bounded back, the blood ran down, and he came no farther. The third being got close to me, stretched out his hand, and in the instant a sharp stone came upon the joints of his fingers. He shook his hand, and was very quiet, till I concluded my discourse and went away.

We came to Shackerley, six miles further, before five in the evening. Abundance of people were gathered before six, many of whom were disciples of Dr. Taylor, laughing at Original Sin, and consequently, at the whole frame of scriptural Christianity. O what a providence is 'it, which has brought us here also, among these silver-tongued anti-christs? Surely a few, at least, will recover out of the snare, and know Jesus Christ as their wisdom and righteousness!

“Monday 29. I preached at Davy-hulme. I had heard a surprizing account concerning a young woman of Manchester, which I now received from her own mother. She said, “On Friday the 4th of last March, I was sitting in the house while one read the passion-hymn. I had always before thought myself good enough, having constantly gone to church and said my prayers, nor had I ever heard any of the Methodist preachers. On a sudden I saw our Saviour on the Cross, as plain as if it had been with my bodily eyes: and I felt it was *my* sins for which he died. I cried out, and had no strength left in me. Whether my eyes were open or shut, he was still before me hanging on the cross, and I could do nothing but weep and mourn day and night. This lasted till Monday in the afternoon. Then I saw as it were heaven open, and God sitting upon his throne, in the midst of ten thousand of his saints: and I saw a large book in which all my sins were written; and he blotted them all out,

and my heart was filled with peace, and joy, and love, which I have never lost to this hour.

"In the evening I preached at Booth-bank. Tuesday 30. I preached about one at Oldfield-brow. We rode in the afternoon to Woodley; we saw by the way many marks of the late flood: of which John Bennet, who was then upon the place, gave us the following account.

"On Saturday the 23d of July last, there fell for about three hours, in and about Heyfield in Derbyshire, a very heavy rain which caused such a flood as had not been seen by any now living in those parts.

"The rocks were loosened from the mountains: one field was covered with huge stones from side to side.

"Several water-mills were clean swept away, without leaving any remains,

"The trees were torn up by the roots, and whirled away like stubble.

"Two women of a loose character were swept away from their own door and drowned: one of them was found near the place; the other was carried seven or eight miles.

"Heyfield church-yard was all torn up, and the dead bodies swept out of their graves. When the flood abated, they were found in several places. Some were hanging on trees; others left in meadows or grounds; some partly eaten by dogs, or wanting one or more of their members.'

"Wednesday 31st. John Bennet shewed me a gentleman's house, who was a few years since utterly without God in the world. But two or three years ago, God laid his hand, both upon his body and soul. His sins dropt off. He lived holy and unblameable in all things. And not being able to *go about doing good*, he resolved to do what good he could at home. To this end he invited his neighbours to his house, every Sunday morning and evening, (not being near any church) to whom he read the prayers of the church and a sermon. Sometimes he had an hundred and fifty, or two hundred of them at once. At Bongs I received an invitation from him; so John Bennet and I rode down together: and found him rejoicing under the hand of God, and praising him for all his pain and weakness.

"In the evening I preached at Chinley."

The letter which Mr. Wesley wrote at Widdap, detailing the whole of the riotous proceedings, affords satisfactory evidence of its having been addressed to Mr. White,—a circumstance known to but few of even the early readers of his Journals. A bare perusal will be sufficient to show, that the

person addressed was considered as the *moving cause* of the disturbance, the *leader*, and an *active agent*,—all perfectly descriptive of the title Mr. White assumed, and the conduct he manifested, and equally inapplicable to any other than himself on the occasion.*

Previously to this, Mr. Wesley, when at Skircoat-green, took up his residence with Abraham Kershaw; but now the house of Mr. Blakey Spencer, one of the first members of the Methodist Society in the neighbourhood of Halifax, was opened for the reception and the exercise of his ministry. Several of the descendants of this worthy, are to be found in the annals of Methodism, among whom is a grandson,

* If the reader connects with the proceedings at Colne, during this visit, the personal history of the Rev. George White, "Commander in Chief," a variety of strange associations will step into existence. Among the list of publications of which he was the author, are two "Burlesque Poems;" and surely no man ever exposed himself more to retort than he did, as the hero of a poetical production from the Hudibrastic pen of another Butler. It would have afforded no small amusement to a person of less fertility of invention than the author of *Hudibras*, had he been disposed to adventure upon such a work, and of more than ordinary mortification to the subject, to have been exhibited in a *Serio-Comic Satirical Poem*, in the canonicals of a Roman Catholic Clergyman—linked arm in arm, in the bloom of youth, with "The Mother of Harlots," professing at the same time to be enamoured with her person—applying the tip of his tongue, for want of better employment, like another child, to the great toe of his Holiness—holding a wafer between his finger and thumb, and gazing upon its littlenesses as well as its imaginary magnitude, like a heathen beholding one of his minor household deities, and smacking his lips over it for the salvation of his soul—lighting up his countenance and rubbing his hands, "in the chambers of his imagery," over the fires of Smithfield—turning his back on the old lady he had recently courted, and, to employ a part of one of his title pages, casting a "Sheep's Eye" at another church, with which, in an ill-fated hour, he contrived, through the recommendation of Dr. Potter, to manufacture an union, as hideous and unnatural as the marriage of some of the Sylvan Gods, which appear in Milton's *Comus*, half human and half brute, with the beautiful young lady that was benighted in their sylvan haunts—next attired in the habiliments of a Minister of the Church of England—devoutly preaching up salvation and order to his flocks, in the pulpits of Colne and Marsden, then, like another Jack-the-Giant-killer, with his club in his hand, and with all the ferocity of a New Zealander, going forth to maltreat his innocent neighbours, and spread confusion and dismay throughout his parish—now administering the elements of bread and wine for the life of the soul, and then, for the destruction of both soul and body, herding with the "beasts of the people," in the nook of a common pot-house, with the glass in his hand, and the pipe in his mouth, enveloped in smoke, listening to the song of the drunkard and the voice of the swearer—now in his study, preparing for the Christian Sabbath, and composing a sermon against the Methodists, in hope of profiting by its sale, and of recommending himself to the notice of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and then presented with a living within the walls of Chester Castle, to mingle with characters only less criminal than himself, and without a penny to claim as his own—now legally uniting his parishioners in the bonds of holy matrimony, and then furnishing them with an example of something like a hasty trip to the blacksmith in the north, with a female whose countrymen and countrywomen entertain such exalted notions of the English, as to have little else to present to them, but a dancing doll and a box organ—now fighting like a champion for the Church of England, and then leaving his own pulpits without a preacher for weeks together—now complaining of the Methodists being idle and endangering the manufacturing establishments in the neighbourhood, and then furnishing them with an instance of honest industry, by commencing a wholesale dealer in the burial service, toiling either by moon or candle light, amidst the stillness of the night, and moving over the graves like another spectre—thus, like a multitude of personages in a drama, alternately appearing in every diversity of costume and character. Or, to drop the notion of a Poem, the different metamorphoses experienced by the Rev. George White, and the situations in which he was so frequently found, would have afforded admirable subjects for Teniers and Hogarth, some of them keeping in countenance the drolls of the former, and others the severer engravings of the latter, whose tools were like the pen of Juvenal, when employed on his satires; and it ought to have been a source of grateful joy to the pastor of Colne, as he was contemporary with Hogarth, that he escaped the exercise of his genius. It can be no discredit to the Methodists to have it to state, that they were opposed by such men as George White, any more than it can injure the reputation of a man to have been knocked down on the King's highway, by a person destined to grace the pages of the *Newgate Calender*: nor can it be in the smallest degree derogatory to the Established Church, to be obliged to witness the delinquency of one of her children, any more than the general good character of a family can be impeached, by the improper conduct of one of its Members.

still living, a respectable Local Preacher in the Halifax Circuit.

In addition to violent opposition at Colne, the greater part of the Societies, from twelve to twenty miles round Haworth, were deprived this year of the labour of Jonathan Catlowe, who had acted some time in the capacity of a Local Preacher, but now entered the itinerant life. He commenced his ministerial exertions at the early age of sixteen; and though it was a period when little else but verdure and blossom could be expected, he is stated to have been "blest with a considerable degree of heavenly wisdom, and fervent zeal, for the honour of God, and the salvation of souls." His call to the work will keep his youth perfectly in countenance, being distinguished with all the simplicity of childhood, both as it regards himself and the persons concerned; and to others than those who are acquainted with the early history of the son of Hannah, and can conceive of the voice of God being as distinctly heard by the child Samuel, and as much intended for him—though at first he perceived it not, as it was correctly understood by the aged Eli, the subject will present no attraction. He resided at Scartop, about two miles from Haworth. Soon after his conversion to God, he was deeply impressed with a conviction, that it was his duty to call sinners to repentance; but having no christian friend to whom he thought proper to unbosom the secrets of his soul, except his mother, to her he resorted for advice. She gave it as her opinion, that he ought to make a trial, and resolved to accompany him. The time and the opportunity arrived; and to render it as little irksome as possible, his mother, who, by the way, was the better reader of the two, and to whom age and experience had imparted superior prowess, gave out the hymns. The scene of this exhibition was a house, called Sough, near the edge of the moor, and the most remote in the parish of Keighly. His auditors were a few old women, who intimated that he had done very well; and from that day he never looked back, but went forward in the name of the Lord. This youth might have found it difficult to pass the examination of an English Bishop's domestic chaplain, for want of classical attainments, and not less so to pass an examining Committee belonging to some of our Dissenting Academies, for want of skill in some minor doctrinal points; and without at all appearing invidious by such remarks, he might have been checked in his progress through a Local Preachers' Meeting of more modern date among the Methodists: but the good old ladies, full as indifferent to non-

essentials as he himself was ignorant of their use, brought him to the test of personal experience—without which even a mitred head would have been “found wanting” at their board, and awarded him their sanction. However the writer may be disposed to applaud the simplicity of the case, and to justify the decision in connexion with the issue—the youth turning out well, it would redound but little to the honour of the man who should cite it as a precedent for the establishment of such a tribunal: and much as may be admired, this lovely picture of maternal solicitude, as a spontaneous, solitary instance—the tender mother herself, perhaps, beginning to be stricken in years, coming to bear up the hands of her still more feeble, and possibly only son—to assist him in an experiment upon which his present comfort depended, and by which his future career of usefulness was to be determined, there must ever be a conviction, that, to multiply such examples, would not only be to diminish their value by destroying their effect, but would be to advocate a cause for which there is no direct scriptural authority, and which female delicacy would in most instances prohibit.

It will appear from the specimens which have passed in review, that the opposition which almost every where obstructed the path of a Methodist Preacher, demanded no small degree of intrepidity, and no ordinary deadness to the world. These qualities were frequently called into exercise in the case of Jonathan Catlowe, as well as the more passive grace of patience. When outward violence failed, or was not altogether deemed expedient, various stratagems were resorted to, which required precaution. In one place where the person in question had been preaching, the mob contrived to dig a deep pit in the middle of the road along which he had to pass on his return home. Having filled the pit with water, it was their intention to have plunged him into it; but when he came near the spot, on perceiving their design—though without appearing to take any notice of it, he quietly turned aside, and thus escaped the danger. The agents, as he apprehended, were at no great distance; and the foremost of them, supposing that the preacher had fallen into the snare, rushed forward and plunged into it themselves, while their fellows, before they were aware of their mistake, shared, in their impetuous course, the same fate; the unoffending object of their malevolence, in the interim, making his escape. This circumstance has been improperly associated with the life of Mr. S. Bardsley.

As the Societies in different places acquired strength,

from their numbers and comparative affluence, in the same proportion attention was paid to their regular organization. It was an organization, however, which arose out of circumstances, and was not the result of previous design. In an old Society Book—perhaps the oldest now extant in the Methodist Connexion, with the exception of one at Haworth, lent to the writer by Miss Lacey, Hanging-Ditch; Todmorden, there is the following entry:—"Oct. 18th, 1748. At a meeting, then held at Major Marshall's, of the Leaders of Classes of several Religious Societies—The following persons were chosen *Stewards*; Jas. Greenwood, John Parker, John Maden, and James Dyson."

This is important, not only as the first notice, but the first formal election of Stewards. Mention had been made of *Leaders* prior to this; and they were regularly authorized Leaders, that proceeded in the work of election. Aware that it was their peculiar province to attend to the *spiritual* state of the flock, and unwilling to blend the *accountant* with the *teacher*—things *sacred* with things *temporal*, they appointed men from among themselves to superintend the *financial* affairs of the church: and this has been characteristic of Methodism from the commencement—first to attend to the soul, and then to the body—to urge men to seek first the kingdom of God, under a firm conviction that all other things should be added to them.—The election was not the work of the *People*, but of the *Leaders*—not confined to a single *Society*, but concerned the *Societies*, all being *united*, and belonging to a *body* EMINENTLY ONE—and they were not *Methodist*, but "*Religious Societies*," thus shewing, that whatever epithets others might load them with, they wished only to appear as Religious Characters.—In addition to the separate offices of Leader and Steward, we are furnished also with an example of a LEADERS' MEETING—a meeting composed of men, not belonging to classes which met in the same village or town, but which were from six to eight or ten miles asunder. A dark, cold, *October* night, as an excuse for non-attendance, might have been urged by such men with peculiar emphasis.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Grimshaw publishes an Answer to Mr. White's Sermon, and defends the Methodists—Haworth—The poverty of Halifax Society—Mr. Titus Knight—Mr. Wesley visits Manchester and the neighbourhood—Mr. Clayton's political opinions—Mr. Whitfield preaches in different parts of Lancashire, &c.—John Bennet's marriage, and its probable effects—Mr. Hopper's arrival in Manchester—The floor of the preaching-room gives way—The Society is accommodated with a place of worship, at Coldhouse-brow, by a Baptist Minister—John Maddern.

MR. Grimshaw, in the course of this year, published a Reply to the aspersions cast upon the Methodists by the celebrated George White.* As the latter possessed more of the bully than the Jesuit, the Vicar of Haworth treated him with less ceremony than he would have perhaps otherwise have done, and therefore occasionally indulged in personalities. The objections urged by his opponent were such as had been repeatedly employed by others, and since then, have met with various replies. Without noticing any of the doctrinal objections, the futility of which Mr. Grimshaw showed from the Bible in which Mr. White professed to believe, and the Liturgy, Homilies, and Articles of the Church to which he professed to belong, it may afford some instruction to such as have not been favoured with a perusal of Mr. Grimshaw's "Answer," to observe how the combatants met each other on subjects of a practical bearing, when they fairly entered the arena of controversy. There was too much honesty

* The reply is entitled, "An answer to a Sermon, lately published against the Methodists by the Rev. Geo. White, A. B. Minister of Colne and Marsden, in Lancashire. By Wm. Grimshaw, B. A. Minister of Haworth, in Yorkshire.—Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischief; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil, more than good: and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever. He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. The righteous also shall see and fear, and laugh at him. Psalm 52. 1—6.—Semper ego Auditor tantum? Nunquamne reponam? Juv." The motto was nearly as prophetic as it was pungent; for he was not long in "the land of the living," after its publication.

and impetuosity in the composition of Mr. Grimshaw to admit of a flourish of swords before the fatal thrust.

"You proceed," says Mr. Grimshaw, 'If we take a survey of the different constitutions and establishments of life, we shall find that order and regularity is necessary to their essential preservation, &c.' This is granted in your introduction; and God forbid that this should be denied or interrupted in the economy of the church. But how does it appear that the Methodists even so much as attempt any such thing, or that their principles or practices have, in any wise, any such tendency? Their teachers intermeddle not in the administration of the sacraments.* they neither disturb you nor any man, that I ever heard of, in your ministerial function; so far from this, that contrarywise, they are exceeding good *subs* to us, if we have but grace to see and acknowledge it. I believe, if we will but speak the truth, as we hope to answer for it at the day of judgment, we must own, that they have, through the divine assistance, who sends by whom he will send, wrought a far greater reformation in our parishes than we have done. Ah, Sir, you little know, but I pray God make you sensible and thankful for it too, before you die, how those dear servants of the Lord laboured night and day for you, without a penny from your purse, whilst you boarded at Chester Castle, and for three years together since, whilst you have been raking about in London, and up and down in the country. And now, at your return to your flock, do you find that any amongst them, that follow these good men, who deserve so well at your hands, behave disorderly at Church? Do they live dishonestly or unpeaceably among their neighbours? Or do they wrong or defraud you or any man, of their dues? Surely men of their principles, will do no such things, nor occasion any such confusion as your merciless spirit would brand them with. On the contrary, your own late riotous conduct, heading a lawless rabble of irreligious, dissolute wretches, under the name and title of *Commander in Chief*, spiriting them up to the perpetration of many grievous outrages, and inhumanly treating and abusing numbers of poor, inoffensive people; I must say, this is a far more shameful violation of order, in both Church and State; done, too, under the zeal of religion, and in defence of the Church of England! You may labour, indeed, (for what base thing is it that ill-will and malice will not prompt a man to?) to make Mr. Whitfield's collection for the Orphan-

* The Sacraments were not then administered by the Preachers.

House in Georgia no better than a veil for the most iniquitous intentions; and wildly, as well as uncharitably, amuse men with consequences as odious as the black examples introduced, are intended to serve. But, Sir, does not your own conduct, think you, tally much better with them? Religion, say you, was the excuse for father Girard, the Rector of a Jesuitical Seminary at Toulon's debaucheries, with Mademoiselle Cadiere; and the overflowing of Paris with Protestant blood on a Bartholomew day, and the stabbing of Henry of France by a Dominican; and so is religion an excuse (the defence of the Church of England!) with you, say I, for your mobbing and rioting, with a little less mischief, but, I fear, with no less malice. Ah, poor blind Pharisee, 'First pull the beam out of your own eye;' I wish you be not one of them of whom our Lord prophecies, 'The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.'

"'But,' say you, 'is every bold visionary (words sooner said than understood) to be a guide in matters of the highest importance?' Yes, it is highly needful, in such parishes as your's especially, where he that should be, is not such a guide."

Whenever Mr. Grimshaw found that he could make the temper of his steel tell upon the conduct of his antagonist, he seldom failed to embrace the opportunity. Perceiving another vulnerable point, where he could just strike in between the joints and the harness, he observed;

"These Methodist Preachers 'Are authors of confusion, open destroyers of the public peace, flying in the face of the very Church they may craftily pretend to follow, occasioning many bold insurrections, which threaten our spiritual government; schismatical rebels against the best of churches; authors of a farther breach into our unhappy divisions; contemners of the great command, Six days shalt thou labour, &c.; defiers of all laws, civil and ecclesiastical; professed disrespecters of learning and education, causing a visible ruin of your trade and manufactures, and in short, promoters of a shameful progress of enthusiasm and confusion, not to be paralleled in any other Christian dominion.'

"Bombalio! Clangor! Stridor! Taratantara! Murmur!"

"What a rattle of abominable lies is here!"

Juvenal queries.

"Quid Romæ faciam? Mentiri nescio."

"But you give the world but too good cause to believe, that you did not leave that old harlot, the mother of lies, on

this account. Whatever bad consequences the men of your spirit may maliciously presage, that Methodism may, in time, be attended with, no man that has the least respect for truth, or regard for his own reputation, and hates to be called a liar to his face, can charge it at present with any such evils, as your abandoned conscience has had the impudence to do to his Grace of Canterbury.* Several have attempted, indeed, both from the pulpit and press, to cast various reflections and scandals upon this *new way*, as they, like Athenians, Acts 17, 19, call it; but there is none, we may see, for the purpose, like one of Rome's breeding; it is an old, but true saying,

*Quosmel est imbuta recens servabit Odorem
Testa dice.*

"One thing I know, and so may you too, that a liar is *a child of the devil*, by the very same argument that the devil is a *liar*, and the father of it, John 8, 44; and for a parson to lie is an horrible shame. I must tell you, that long before your sermon appeared, not only the Archbishop of Canterbury, and several of that eminent order, but his Royal Highness, King George, and all the Royal Family, together with most of the Nobility, Gentry, &c. of the land, are, I bless God, better informed of the principles and conduct of the Methodists, than to fear any dangers from them to either church or state."†

The different members of the last cited paragraph from Mr. White's "Epistle Dedicatory," received attention in the "Answer," where they connected themselves with the "Sermon;" but as the charges were presented to his Grace, in the wholesale form, Mr. Grimshaw, more blunt than polite, returned a wholesale Answer, by labelling it with a "lie."

On the charge of *ignorance*, Mr. Grimshaw retorted, "A plain proof you know nought of the matter, otherwise your probability would have been a certainty; but, as it is, it is only a mere slander. And as to the ignorance of their followers of the contents of the 23d Article, I suppose many of them live in your own parish; and, if so, more shame for you to keep them in the dark, not only as to this, but all the other articles, particularly the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 17th, 18th, 31st, and 35th Articles, and the Homilies also, especially the first six of them. Holding these from your people (for what is it else, when you never read them to the congregation?) is almost like, and almost as bad, as clergy of the Church of Rome's withholding the holy Scriptures from

* The quotation is from the "Epistle Dedicatory."

† Answer, p. 44.

theirs. May I further observe, in this case, you are not alone; for the reading of the Homilies and Articles has been laid aside so long, by the generality of our clergy, till the people scarcely know whether there be any such things. Many who have gone forty, fifty, or sixty years to church, declare they never heard them read. For want of doing this more frequently, (and, indeed, once a year is seldom enough) our members gradually forget their first principles,—and the good old path is so utterly lost by us, that now, when the Lord is graciously pleased, instead of punishing as our apostacy deserved, to revive the religion of our forefathers, even the truth as it is in Jesus, by his servants, in reproach, called Methodists, the common cry is, ‘What means this new way!’—The disuse, I say, of the Homilies and 39 Articles of our religion, is certainly the chief occasion of all this mischief in our church. Had they been constantly read, it is very probable, that all these evils had not only been effectually prevented, but Methodism also, which is nothing else but the revival of the doctrines contained therein, had never appeared, these books, and what the Methodists preach, being all one. This, let me add, some few of our clergy are so well advised of, that they purposely evade the reading them to the people, for fear of increasing Methodism,—a term very likely made use of by the art of the devil, to prevent the true end of their ministry, I mean the making good christians and churchmen.—A certain old clergyman, of my acquaintance, lately deceased, being asked by his curate, if he might read the Homilies in the church, answered, no; for, if he should do so, all the congregation would turn Methodists.”

In answer to the attack made on the Preachers, for want of proper ecclesiastical and other qualifications, he observed, “But would these people but read this 23d Article, ‘This they would find puts an end (say you) to any doubt with respect to the qualifications of preachers.’ If you have said any thing material against the Methodists in all your discourse, you have said it here; and yet this Article only relates to the outward qualifications of preachers. I think there is an inward one of so much superior consequence and concern, that where it is wanting, the outward signifies nothing. The Bishops, perhaps, do all that can possibly be expected in the usual way, for their own and the church’s satisfaction, about the inward qualification, or call, of such as desire to be ordained to the ministry. They ask every deacon, ‘Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this office and ministration to serve God, for the promoting

of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" And the candidate replies, 'I trust so.' But is not the true and common motive, the getting a good living, a curacy, or bread? Was it not your's? I confess it was mine. How easily, and how often, the Bishops and the Church are imposed upon by such pretences, is but too evident from the lucrative, luxurious lives, of but too many of the brethren, who make their sacred function a mere trade, and gain their godliness. Lay what stress, therefore, you please, what confidence can the people repose upon this outward qualification?

"But, allowing all that you would make of this Article, it will not follow, that the Methodists reject it, by preaching without it. The truth is, (and shall I be afraid to speak it?) they cannot receive it. Our Saviour has, but man thinks it not proper to qualify them. Many of them want Latin, Greek, and Philosophy; and, therefore, though they have many far more needful accomplishments,—a good stock of plain, practical, experimental divinity, christian conversation, zeal towards God our Saviour, indefatigable industry in preaching the gospel, and many seals of their ministry, yet cannot be admitted thereto in the outward form. But what then? If God has ordained them, sent them forth, and owned and blessed their labours, shall they desist from their mission, till outwardly appointed thereto? 'What are we that we should withstand God?' Shall he not send by whom he will send? And when he is pleased to work by such instruments as you are displeased with, shall you or I let it? You may, indeed, do so; but I never will.

"What you affirm in the next paragraph, will appear, to every unprejudiced reader, as trifling and false as any thing you have said hitherto. The premises will clear them of that monstrous ignorance you would charge them with, in pretending to belong to our church, if their opposing her Articles be your argument to prove it by. Fact proves the very reverse: and the truth is, they actually maintain all the articles of our religion, and, consequently, are true members of our church. How they are guilty (as you assert in the next clause) of an excessive, invincible stubbornness also, on the same account, is to me unintelligible.

"In the next paragraph you may seem to have recourse to your logic, and to comprise the substance of the two foregoing pages in the compass and form of a syllogism, thus:

"According to the doctrine of the church of England, in the 23d Article, it is not lawful for any man to minister or preach in any congregation, except he be called to that office by men who have public authority.

“ ‘ Now these pretended preachers are not called to that office by men who have public authority.

“ ‘ Consequently, it is not lawful,’ &c.

“ Now although the major and minor propositions be granted, yet, I hope I have sufficiently proved, that the consequence is utterly false. One thing here I cannot but take notice of, which perhaps may have more in it than a mere quibble. It is in the manner of your expression, whether inadvertently or intentionally, you know best. By the 23d Article it is not lawful (you twice over say) to minister and preach in *any* congregation. The Article says only (and that twice over) in *the* congregation : now *any* and *the*, methinks, are terms that convey a very different idea to the mind ; *the* seems to import the congregation assembled in the church, and this seems to be the natural sense of the Article ; *any*, a congregation in any wise assembled for a religious purpose : if so, I cannot see how these preachers, by preaching or exhorting in their meetings, either break communion with the church, or contemn and violate, or in any wise infringe upon this Article, even your own way of speaking.

“ ‘ But in order to promote (you proceed) this scheme of confusion and irregularity.’ Whether such be the methodistical scheme has hitherto been falsely asserted, but not proved. I own, indeed, confusion is hereby occasioned, but it is by them who have made it the occasion ; who those are has been already taken notice of, and shall it therefore be charged any more upon the Methodists than that at Philippi, Acts, chap. xvi. upon Paul and Silas, or that at Athens, Acts, chap. xvii. upon Jason and the brethren, or that other at Ephesus, Acts, chap. xix. upon Paul, Gaius, and Aristarchus ?

“ ‘ But in order to promote this scheme of confusion, some of the leaders have found it necessary to usher in the notion of inspiration ; and to persuade a giddy multitude, that learning is no ways requisite to the duties of the ministry.’ If you mean human learning, or imagine that the Methodists mean so, (as, indeed, what can be meant else ?) I hope they are right. Read but the first and second chapters of St. Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, and there you will find they have a very good precedent for their pretence in St. Paul’s example and declaration. ‘ I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God ; my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power ; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power

of God. God hath revealed them (the gospel, that is to say, here called, the things which he hath prepared for them that love him) unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God: which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,' (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4, 5, 10, 13.) Why then should these men's assertion or pretension seem so strange to you; no man can or ought to preach the gospel before he be inspired with the Holy Ghost; or (which is all one) 'feels in himself a spirit, by which he is led to preach.' For, as the apostle says also, 'What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God,' (ibid. ver. 11, 12.) In this objection against the Methodists you manifestly discover the want of this spirit, this *indwelling teacher*, in yourself; and, consequently, however you are outwardly qualified, you have no right, authority, or commission at all to preach; any more than those vagabond Jews. exorcists, and the 'seven sons of Sceva, the priest, had to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus,' (Acts xix. 13, 14.)

" 'But let us inquire (in the next words) into the nature of this plea.' This, sir, may not be improper. 'Now, we must distinguish, say you, two kinds of inspiration, an extraordinary one, such as was granted to the apostles.' This I allow. And that it was granted them for such like purposes, as you assert in your next paragraph. This I own too. 'And that there is an ordinary, (*i. e.* as men now-a-days phrase it) such as we pray for in our collects of public prayer.' This I deny not. But this distinction in this place, sir, is nothing to the purpose: these men affirm, as you yourself say, 'That they feel in themselves a spirit, by which they are led to preach;' and that human learning and education are not necessary herein. 'This is the plea,' as you are pleased to call it. The question is, therefore, whether their pretence to such an inspiration, or motion (whether ordinary or extraordinary) of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel, be reasonable or unreasonable, needful or needless thereto. We have seen, sir, that St. Paul is clearly on their side, making it indispensably needful. But, being St. Paul was one of those apostles, who was endued with the extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the better to enable him to propagate the gospel in the world, and 'to remove (what otherwise would have

been impossible) the strong prejudices of 4000 years, &c.' his authority, I suppose, you will scarcely admit to be an argument to prove the case before us. Let us hear then the sentiments of our church, the ancient fathers quoted by her, and some pious and judicious divines, concerning this matter. Chrysostom, says our church, testifying thereby the approbation of the assertion, declares, 'That man's human and worldly wisdom and science are not needful to the understanding of Scripture; but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them, that with humility and diligence do search; therefore, he that asketh, shall have; and he that seeketh shall find; and he that knocketh, shall have the door opened.'* Eusebius, which is another indication of her mind, 'tells, says she, a strange story of a certain learned and subtil philosopher, who, being an extreme adversary of Christ and his doctrine, could by no kind of learning be converted to the faith, but was able to withstand all the arguments that could be brought against him with little or no labour. At length there stands up a poor simple man, of small wit, and less knowledge, one that was reputed amongst the learned as an idiot, and he in God's name, would needs take in hand to dispute with this proud philosopher; the bishops and other learned men standing by, were marvellously abashed at the matter, thinking, that by his doing, they should all be confounded and put to open shame. He notwithstanding goes on, and beginning in the name of the Lord Jesus, brought the philosopher to such a point in the end, contrary to all men's expectation, that he could not choose but acknowledge the power of God in his words, and to give place to the truth.' 'Now,' says our church, 'Was not this a miraculous work, that one silly soul of no learning, should do that which many bishops of great knowledge and understanding were never able to bring to pass? So true, says she, is the saying of Bede: Where the Holy Ghost doth instruct and teach, there is no delay at all in learning.'†

St. Chrysostom says, 'That the wise man is not profited at all by his wisdom, nor the ignorant man prevented by his ignorance from receiving the preaching of the gospel; yea, if I may, says he, assert a wonderful truth, ignorance is more fit and apt to receive the gospel than wisdom: and a shepherd or ploughman (so far differs this venerable father from you in your margin, page 18) will sooner submit to it than a learned man, who relies on the strength of human wisdom and reason.'‡

* Homily of Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 2d part.

† Homily for Whitsunday, 1st part.

‡ Chrys. Hom. 4th, in 1st Epist. ad Corinth.

"This very truth the Methodists have abundant experience of daily; I myself can produce some hundreds of instances of it, within the compass of my small ministry; and hope, sir, to see as many more before I die.

"But to proceed, Luther affirms, 'That it is an error to say, a man cannot be a divine, but by reading Aristotle,' (i. e.) by means of learning and education.) 'Nay,' says he, in the next words, 'He cannot be a divine, except he become one without Aristotle.'*

"This same excellent servant of Christ has another strange expression (but which all the Methodists know to be true) which is this, 'A man is made a divine by living, yea by dying and damning, and not by instruction, reading, and study.'†

"And again, 'The Scriptures,' says he, 'are not to be understood, but by the same spirit, by which they were written: and that spirit can be found no where more present and lively than in those sacred letters which he himself hath written.'‡

"Zuinglius declares, 'We must needs be taught the gospel, not of men, but of God: for that it is the eternal truth, which knows not how to lie, (John 6 chap.) But if you do not firmly believe, that you may be taught of God, human doctrine being utterly rejected, you are still void of true faith. Neither, says he, have I myself invented this. For Hilary also is of the same opinion; but there is no need of his testimony, when we hear that Christ and his apostles were of the same mind.'§

"Calvin affirms, 'That it is necessary, that the same spirit, which spoke by the mouths of the prophets, should pierce into our hearts to persuade us that they faithfully related what was by him delivered to them.'||

"Bishop Latimer, that blessed martyr, asserts, 'That carnal and philosophical understanding of the Scriptures is

* Error est dicere, sine Aristotele non sit Theologus: Imo, Theologus non sit, nisi id fiat sine Aristotele. Luth. fol. 1st, page 10th.

† Vivendo, imo moriundo, et damnando, sit Theologus, non intelligendo, legendo, aut speculando. Luth. fol. 2. page 57.

‡ Scripturæ non nisi eo Spiritu intelligendæ sunt, quo scriptæ sunt. Qui Spiritus nusquam præsentius et vivacius, quam in ipsis sacris, suis quas scripsit, Literis inveniri, potest. Luth. fol. 2. page 300.

§ Zuingl. Lib. de Certitudine et Veritate Verbi Dei.

|| Idem Spiritus, qui per os prophetarum locutus est, in corda nostra penetret, necesse est: Ut persuadeat fideliter protulisse, quod divinitus erat mandatum. Calv. Institut. Lib. 1. cap. 8. sec. 4.

not that wisdom of God, which is hid from the wise, and revealed to babes.*

"You see, sir, what the church, and these worthy divines say of the necessity of the continual presence of the Holy Ghost, to unfold the sacred writings to the understandings of both teachers and hearers, and how small account they made of learning and education in this matter. The very same, and no other, do the Methodists maintain. This therefore being all they pretend to; all that you say about the extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, the occasion of them in the church, and also their ceasing, for upwards of two pages following, is quite foreign to the case of the Methodists, and the very design you would serve by it.

If they affirm no more, what need of such a long harangue of nonsense about ordinary and extraordinary inspiration? If they also have our church on their side for all that they say of their own inspiration, and the insignificance of learning and education, or at least the non-necessity (if I may so speak) of it for a preacher of the Gospel; and if the Holy Ghost makes divines, as is evident from the premises; why should they be thought to blame in asserting that they have a motion of the Spirit to preach? Why should they be charged 'With giving way to gloomy imaginations, or raising themselves to such a pitch of enthusiasm?' How can you charge these people of God, these servants of our dear Saviour, without reflecting upon the Holy Ghost and his gracious inspiration, and the sending forth of his ministers, in the foulest manner? I hope, in pity to your poor soul, that your ignorance will screen you, or else I really do not see how you can be clear of the commission of the unpardonable sin. You talk, poor man, of reason, of just reflection, and the firmness of a man; but where appears it? Are you not also at the same time casting dirt upon your own church? Are you not flatly denying, and maliciously ridiculing what she maintains; even that church are not you yourself, 'Flying in the face of, which you craftily pretend to follow?' Fy for shame.

"Your own words, in the latter end of the last paragraph, (page 14th) will allow a very obvious and easy inference in favour of the Methodists as to this very point, viz., that inspiration is, and human learning and education are not, requisite and necessary for a minister of the gospel. For you

* *Carnalis et philosophica Scripturarum intelligentia, non est Sapientia Dei, quæ a sapientibus absconditur, parvulis revelatur.* Latimer's Answer to Sir Edward Bainton's Letter.

say that amongst other designs of God in inspiring the apostles in an extraordinary manner, this was one, 'To convince the world that the system of the redemption was not a system of learning.' From hence then we may infer, that this system requires not learning and education to support it, and to preach the doctrines of it. One may reasonably suppose that that which has no learning in it, may be understood and explained without learning. We may likewise reasonably suppose, that the same Divine Spirit which gave us this system of the redemption, will himself instruct us in the true sense of it. As our Saviour says, 'The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' John xiv, 26.

To the charge instituted against the preachers, of making a *gain of godliness*, he replied:

"In the next words you fall upon Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Wesley. Mr. Whitefield, you are pleased censoriously to charge with what the world do, or may know to be a lie: 'That a satisfactory account has not been given us of Mr. Whitefield's disbursements in Georgia, and I am afraid, by his late modest insinuations, in or about the highlands of Scotland, of the want of five hundred pounds, &c.

"Mr. Wesley's fellowship, I am credibly informed, is about an £100 per annum, out of which £30 are deducted by the college for non-residence; the remainder, with the profits arising from the sale of his books, are so entirely laid out in carrying on the great and good work he is engaged in, that he scarcely provides necessaries for himself. This is a true relation of that good man's estate, of whom you are pleased roundly and falsely to affirm, 'That he has a better income than most of our bishops.' Prove your assertion. 'And as to the under-hand lay-praters, (as you call them) I have reason to assert, &c. they may be supposed to be in a better way of living than the generality of our vicars and curates.' This you likewise would impose upon the world for truth. Pray, make a careful, impartial enquiry into this matter; you may do it with little trouble, no expence, and in your own parish. What can a penny or two, once a fortnight, from the abler sort, do for them? The poor are excused, and no one obliged to give any thing. Were the generality of vicars and curates no better provided for; were their livings as poor and precarious; and their labours as indispensably painful and irksome, there would be none such

striving for them, nor half so many, as, it is to be feared, there are, ready, Ananias and Sapphira like, to lie to the Holy Ghost, in saying 'they are moved,' &c. &c.

Mr. White's objection to the *occupation* of some of the preachers, called forth the pleasantry rather than the gravity of his opponent.

"I shall only take notice of this one thing more in your marginal reference, and that is, the offence you take at men attempting to preach, 'Who have never been conversant further than the plough.' A plough, Sir! an edifying machine! Were you well at it, it would not only best become the name you are pleased to give yourself of *Agricola Candidus*,* but possibly you might receive the first true call to the ministry from thence: a plough may make as good a priest as a popish academy; try the experiment awhile, and who knows but — Should you think it a disgrace to follow a lay-prater from that instrument, remember, for your credit and comfort, that Elisha was ploughing with twelve yokes of oxen, when he was called to succeed Elijah in the prophetic office, 1 Kings xix. 19, 20; and St. Chrysostom, afore observed, has spoken very honourably of a ploughman. Where, then, can be the harm or shame in such a call? However, *Ne sævi, magne Sacerdos*. Be not offended; I only propose it.

A variety of other objections were either maliciously invented or ignorantly palmed upon the Methodists, all of which were honestly and fairly met; and if not acutely and dexterously overturned, at least *satisfactorily* answered. The following are a few more selected from the general mass.

"Page 21, you hasten to your second proposition, under which you pretend to lay down 'Such persuasive inferences or observations, as may possibly prevent all this confusion and other notorious ill consequences.'

"The first is an entreaty 'Of this set of people, to look into themselves with a little more circumspection and impartiality; to examine the prejudices of their hearts, and what real grounds they have to rebel against the canons and articles of the best of churches.' Physician, heal thyself: pray pull the beam out of your own eye. This entreaty concerns not the Methodists, as being no violaters, but asserters, of them, at least in a fuller manner than the generality of her pretended members do.

* In English *George*, alias Husbandman *White*.

"In the next paragraph, pregnant with a variety of false insinuations, you beg 'Of them to consider how our dissenting enemies will triumph on this fresh disunion.' When you or they can prove that the Methodists occasion a fresh disunion by their present conduct, both you and they may triumph.

"'Industrious trade, also, in consequence of so many constant attendances on this new model of worshipping the Creator,' (as old, however, as the days of our Lord and his Apostles,) 'will become an idle concern,' Sir, in my own, in others, and I dare say, in your parish also, the constant attenders on this *new model of worship*, as you falsely call it, are more industrious in their trade and other occupations, and maintain their families better than ever they did before.

"But, sir, I make the following appeal to your own conscience, whether you do not believe that trade receives more obstruction and real detriment, in one week, from numbers that run a hunting; from numbers more, that allow themselves, in various idle diversions, an hour, two, or sometimes three daily, for what is vulgarly called a Noon-sit; and from many yet more, who loiter away their precious time, on a market day in your town, in drunkenness, janglings, and divers frivolous matters, than from all that give the constantest attendance to this new model of worship, in the space of two or three months. Admitting these people are in an error, is not their conduct, rather than that of those others, more likely to bring a blessing to your trade? But supposing that this model of worship, so contemptible in your eye, be truly Christian, as I hope, is evidently proved before, and consequently altogether agreeable to the will of God, must not its devotees be those only, in whose hands, by whose means, and for whose sakes God will prosper it?

"'Consider' say you in the next place, 'how family affairs will suffer an inevitable neglect.' This is as groundless and disingenuous an insinuation as the last. You seem willing to say any thing, rather than say true. This requires a general proof, for an instance or two, in such a case as this, amounts to no more than only to shew that the bad behaviour of a few may blemish a good cause, and the otherwise irreproveable conduct of the whole. This is a common device of Satan; and you seem, as well in this as in most you have said hitherto, mightily inclined to second *Old Harry*. But you only surmise that family affairs will suffer. Remember, *will* is one tense, and *doth* is another. Do family concerns, therefore, and that in a general way, suffer what you, as boldly, as basely, term an *inevitable neglect*?

“‘A neglect,’ you add, ‘which may unfortunately prevent the education of children.’ What education is here meant? Is it in *literature*, in *religion*, or (which you seem most concerned for) in *trade*? Have any of the Methodists, who had aforetime designed to have given their children a liberal education, taken them from school since, or neglected to keep them constantly thereto; or do they not mind to bring them up in religion, in the *nurture* and *admonition*, and to the praise and glory of the Lord, so well as before. I doubt not, but upon an ingenuous inquiry, you will find that they do it much better; yea, many will be found to do this now, that never did, nor perhaps never would have done it, had they never followed the Methodists. How many in your parish take the same care that these people do in this respect? Or, lastly, do they not in general (for an instance or two, as aforesaid, can be no exception) teach and inure their children to trade, and industry therein, as well, if not much better, now than before? Surely, then, Methodism can, in this respect, be no occasion of the *ruin of a rising generation*. Away, then, for shame, with such malicious *prognostications* and malevolent *may be’s*.

“The substance of your next paragraph might be readily granted:—The Methodists deny not learning and education to be useful for the purposes you mention, or that such evils, as you intimate, might possibly attend the want of them. Something not unlike this has been in hand before: but is this, that you have said in this place, all that you intend by learning and education? No; we are to guess at something that better connects with the rest of your discourse; and that we must gather out of the margin; namely, that they despise learning and education for the uses of ‘Demonstratively proving the veracity of the Holy Scriptures; reconciling their apparent contradictions; or explaining in a masterly taste, like a worthy teacher, the sacraments and the new covenant. At this distance of time, idioms also, customs, and national proverbs are to be well known and digested for these purposes; but how, without the above-mentioned qualifications.’ The Methodists despise not learning on these accounts either.

“This they believe, that learning, even on these accounts, is not as necessary in these days as formerly. There are so many comments and expositions upon the Old and New Testament, done by the most able authors, both ancient and modern, that little more can or need be added for the understanding of the sacred text. I think there are far too many already extant, insomuch that thereby the genuine

sense, in many places, is rather obscured than illustrated; and this, I should think, should be a sufficient warning, by the bye, not to lean too much upon human learning and education in these respects: for which reason the Methodists, as many truly wise and pious men have done before them, prefer experimental divinity to all *letter-learned performances*, and esteem it to be the best spring to practical religion. The Holy Ghost alone teaches, and the heart learns this. The other, man teaches, and the head receives. In this, all our wisest rabbies and most sage philosophers are mere fools; and the most illiterate Methodists, brought up at the *loom* or *anvil*, quite outstrip and confound them, as I have before shewn. This learning, not all the universities in Europe are able to teach; and yet no one without this, notwithstanding the advantage of the most eminent natural and acquired parts, ought to assume the offices of the priesthood. This has been already taken notice of.

“‘Believe me,’ say you in the next words; (but who can believe you after so many palpable untruths?) but, ‘believe me, the pretence of religion has perhaps occasioned the greatest calamities, and served as a cloke, even to the most inhuman murders and plunderings, the most insatiable avarice and lust.’ But which way, and by whom? This I have already shewn. I shall only add, that in this, not only I, but any one, may believe you. You pretend to religion, and so do all the banditti you lately headed, and at the same time have thoroughly convinced the world, what mischief and confusion pretences to religion can make. You herein have full well proved, Sir, the old proverb to be true, *that a parson’s preaching and life should be all of a piece*.

“Therefore, it can be no reflection upon your character, I hope, to quote your own words in the close of your sermon, in this place. ‘I must beg leave to assure you, that the sense of duty I owe to my God,’ (to my God too) does not your text tell you, ‘God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.’ Pray, who is your God then? Surely not this God: the God you serve, if we may conjecture from your conduct, is a god of confusion: and who can this be but the devil? who, you know, is for this very reason called *Diabolus*, (*a scatterer abroad, or maker of confusion*) by the Greeks and Romans. But, however, ‘I must beg leave to assure you, that the sense of duty I owe to my God, the obligations I am under, not only as a regular minister, (regular indeed!) but as a rational inhabitant (rational, there again! *Risum teneatis, Amici?* to see honest industry flourish, instead of

superstitious idleness, will always give me true courage (poor man!) to oppose, to the uttermost, attempts (with your leave, Sir, by the Methodists unattempted) so unnatural and unjust.' Thou art the man! That the Methodists are a disorderly people, you have, indeed, over and over asserted, but never once proved. May it not, therefore, be adviseable to take your own counsel, 'Let us beware, lest we take superstition for religion, the degradation of human reason, the weakness of the brain, a dream of the night, (and, let me add, *a drum-head at Colne-Cross*) terrifying indeed, where there is no danger.'

"True religion, you proceed, being a system of real reason, will always stand the test of a judicious inquiry.' So it is, and so it will; and to this I freely submit my account of the methodistical doctrines. But one thing seems all along wanting on your part, and that is, to let us know what you call *true religion*; you have guessed well, indeed, at the blessings attending it, but whilst that is wanting, this avails little.

"In page the 20th, 'one might have thought, that *repentance, a change of heart, and conversion to God*, had meant at least, what most moralists make of them, a turning from an evil to a good life. But how far your conceptions of religion come short even of this, the next paragraph informs us: 'True religion was never intended to sour our tempers, to give us a melancholy turn of countenance, or even to deprive us of the decent conveniences and innocent amusements of life.' The very language of an epicure! The dialect of a rake or debauchee! Doctrines adapted to the very purpose of promoting licentiousness and libertinism. It is said, I confess, on all sides, that the Methodists *preach people beside their senses*. But you, it seems, choose another way, viz. with the 'priests of Israel, to heal the hurt of the daughter of God's people slightly,' Jer. vi. 14. To you, we are to suppose, it is a grievous offence, and an egregious error, that these praters teach, that no one must frequent ale-houses, fairs, pastimes, or diversions of any sort, upon pain of eternal damnation; and that if men hunt, game, or play at tables, cards, or dice, &c., they must go to hell. 'By this means they sour men's tempers, and deprive them of the decent conveniences and innocent amusements of life.' But you say also in these cases, 'peace, peace, when there is no peace?' (ibid.) And thus, as it is with the people, so it is with the priest. By this we may plainly see what a preacher of repentance and conversion you are, or rather how little you

are acquainted with either. Had you ever experienced aright the weight and burden of sin, the irksomeness of guilt, a wounded spirit, the wrath of God, the condemnation and curse of his law, and the fearful apprehensions of judgment to come: had you ever felt what David, Psal. vi. 6; the publican, Luke xviii. 13; or the three thousand, Acts ii. 37; or the jailor did, Acts xvi. 29, you would scorn to talk so wildly of a soured temper, or a melancholy turn of countenance. Conviction, or, which is the same thing, repentance, (to which I have spoken before) is necessarily attended, I must tell you, with such a temper. Whoever are strangers to this, are strangers to true conversion and religion; but such as have experienced these things, can no more dispense with what, it is but too evident, you call decent conveniences or innocent amusements, no, not a jest or vain word, than they can with the grossest act of murder or adultery; and yet you have affirmed, 'We (as if you did) preach up repentance, &c. as highly necessary.'

"You proceed, 'Rather let us look on the great Deity, as the compassionate Father of mankind.' Strange divinity! These words, if they mean any thing, mean what is most impious and profane. You represent that Holy One, 'who is of purer eyes than to behold evil,' Hab. i. 13, as a compassionate father to such as live in it; as one that connives at innocent diversions, as you term it, and will never punish for them, though nothing be more certain from his own words than the contrary, Eccles. xi. 9. This delusory doctrine has caused many poor men, on a dying bed, to look back on a life thus spent, as no bad one, or of the least dangerous consequence to their eternal welfare; nor are they, as they ought to be, exhorted by their ghostly fathers to repent thereof, upon pain of their everlasting ruin. Or should they conscientiously or cursorily mention these follies, it is commonly passed by with an, 'Oh! God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss; he will never enter into judgment with you on these accounts: they are frivolous trifles, or rather, such beneficial recreations to human life, as God does rather approve, than blame us for.' Yes, O blind leader of such blind, the Almighty, wise, and just God, I again aver, will as certainly, and everlastingly, if not as severely, punish the smallest vanity or diversion, as the most heinous and atrocious parricide. Good Lord, deliver us from such soul-physicians as these be! How must Satan and Hell be beholden to such! What numbers, may we greatly fear, are thus decoyed into that 'bottomless lake, where the worm

dieth not, and the fire is never quenched,' Mark ix. 44. It is shocking to hear, that that very compassion and mercy, which principally moved God 'to send his only begotten Son into the world,' to save us from eternal death, should be made use of as an argument to involve us in it. Thus much in answer to your sermon. If any thing may seem to be spoken with too much warmth, impute it not to anger, or want in any wise of charity and benevolence, but to a well-meant zeal for the 'truth as it is in Jesus,' and its votaries: if you will not, you are welcome to do as you please. What I desire to add more is, only a few general observations upon Methodism, and a word of exhortation to all sorts of people.

"Methodism, so called by way of reproach, is a complete system of gospel truths, and a perfect summary of reformation-principles. The more ingenuously and attentively men search into it, the more evident and undeniable will this appear. It therefore needs must, and accordingly does, gain the esteem and approbation of many of every denomination. Notwithstanding the general opposition made to it on all sides, it daily gains ground. Its progress, considering how few years it is since its first appearance, is surprisingly extensive. It has all the marks and indications of a divine work. It ascribes the total of a man's salvation to the mere free grace of God, the sole merits of Christ, and the operation of the Holy Ghost. It makes faith the instrument, Jesus's blood the cause, and the discoverer of our justification. It attributes our sanctification wholly to this heavenly paraclete. It makes Christ the Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of our faith. Its sect is every where spoken against. It holds forth, not the form merely, but the life and power of godliness also."

A greater latitude of quotation has been indulged, than would have otherwise been deemed proper, had it not been to exemplify something of the spirit of the times—the first public controversy which professes to come within the limits of the work—and for the difficulty of procuring either the "Sermon" or the "Answer," in a separate form. The "Answer," it is true, has been republished by Mr. Myles, in his *Life of Mr. Grimshaw*: but even there, in its appended situation, a comparatively slender portion of the members of the Wesleyan Family have been furnished with the perusal of its pages. In glancing over the whole of the objections, both those which have been noticed and those which will continue to repose themselves in the "Answer," it will be found that many of them are precisely of the same character with those

which were instituted against the Apostles and primitive teachers of Christianity—such as have been urged against any extraordinary work of God in every age—such as the carnal heart might be conceived capable of inventing, in order to shield itself in its depravity—and such, as already observed, as have accompanied Methodism in all its stages. The objections advanced by every new assailant, resemble so many old coins turning up to the eye of the medalist, which he instantly recognizes as either having already in his cabinet, or having fingered them with feelings peculiar to himself before; or perhaps, more properly, like the face of an old enemy, upon which a person unexpectedly pounces, on turning the sharp angle of one of the most public streets of a large town,—one of the last places in which, in order to avoid detection, the man should dare to have appeared without a mask. From the period of penning these pages, to the day that Methodism first made its appearance, many a George White, like another Shimei, has “gone along on the hill’s side over against” the Methodists, “and cursed,” and thrown “stones” at them, and “cast dust” upon them, as they have proceeded with devotion and humility “by the way of” human life: and though a Grimshaw has been occasionally permitted to go out of the ranks, it has not been with a view to fulminate the wrath of God in return, but to chastise the temerity of such as have egregiously committed themselves—to preserve the equally wicked but less courageous at bay—and to protect the character of calumniated innocence. How far the pastor of Colne profitted by the castigation of the vicar of Haworth, is not for the present generation to determine; but as no formal reply has descended to posterity, and no notice of any can be found, it is not unlikely that he was afraid to hazard another engagement, and might possibly attempt to reconcile his friends to his silence, by stating, like many others, incapable of self-defence, that the “Answer” was beneath his notice; an excuse very convenient for the inventor, but the true meaning of which every man of sense will be able to perceive in the strength of his opponents cause. Mr. Grimshaw stood like a reproving conscience before his opposer, and the pages of his reply must have stared him in the face like so many unrepented sins.

Whatever were the effects produced by the pen of Mr. White, and the missile weapons of his forces, he was at least convinced of his own impotency, and found himself as inadequate to the extirpation of Methodism in Colne, as he was

incapable of damping the ardour of its friends in other directions.

Haworth Society in particular, was in a state of prosperity, both in reference to its finances, and its religious concerns; so much so indeed, as to possess both the heart and the ability to communicate of its abundance to others. On a piece of paper pinned to a leaf of the Haworth Society Book, are the following memorandums, in the hand-writing of Mr. Grimshaw: "April 19, 1749. *Lent* the Brethren at Halifax, £1 10 6."—"July 11, 1749. *Given* to Halifax Society towards defraying the Law Charge, £1 10 6."

The Resolution which had passed in the Leaders' Meeting, as noticed in the book belonging to Miss Lacey, in the course of the preceding year, was also entered by Mr. Grimshaw into the Haworth Society Book, with some important additions. He states the *place* of meeting to have been at "Todmorden-Edge;"—the *Societies* for which Stewards had been chosen, to have been "Rossendale, Rough-Lee, Heppon-stall, Todmorden, &c."—and the *object* of their election to be that of entrusting them with power "to transact the temporal affairs" of the Societies. Then follows an interesting "Memorandum: It was then agreed that if there be any just cause to exchange any of the above Stewards, it shall be done at the next quarterly meeting held for the said Societies, by the approbation of the Leaders then present. Note, if any dispute arise touching the choosing of a Steward or Stewards, the greater number of voices shall have the choice to elect a fresh Steward. This shall be mentioned to our Minister, Mr. John Wesley, or his successor, who shall end any dispute of this kind."*

* Notices of curious, and other entries, will frequently occur in the progress of this work, all of which will have their use in exhibiting either the poverty or wealth of the body, the uses of the monies, passing events, the prices of articles, or the circumstances in which Societies or individuals have been placed, as well as informing us of the preachers labouring in the neighbourhood at the time. Among other entries in the Haworth Society Book, are to be found: "Jan. 10, 1748. A pair of boots for Wm. Darney, 14s."—"Oct. 25d. 1755. Paid for Jonathan Maskew's shirts and stockings, 14s. 10d."—"To Jonathan Maskew's hat, 5s."—"July 22, 1756. To two shirts for Jonathan Maskew, 13s."—"To three cravats for Do. 3s."—"To pumps, 6s."—"To stockings, 3s. 6d."—"Oct. 21, 1756. To Jonathan Maskew's coat, £1 12s. 6d."—"To Wm. Parker for Jonathan Maskew's stocks, 4s. 9d."—"To Jonathan Maskew's coat making, 4s. 6d."—"To Do. for Gamash's, 7s. 6d."—"April 1782. A pair of shoes for Mr. Wesley." These items shew the appropriation of the monies. The Preachers had no regular board till many years after this. Whenever they were in want of suitable raiment or other necessaries, and were without personal or other property, they had no resource to which they could resort, but to the Steward, who furnished them with a supply. Not any thing, connected with the personal history of Mr. Wesley, has excited the admiration of the writer more, in the examination of Society Records, than a number of minute entries, relative to his wearing apparel, &c. The pride of the human heart might dispose some persons to wish the suppression of such things; but they are here suspended as trophies to his honour; for what stronger evidences can there be of his condescension, his disinterestedness, and his benevolence than these! With grace and talents, that would add dignity to the mitre, he nevertheless directs his attention to the poor, and only solicits a pair of shoes, to preserve his feet from the mud, while travelling for their welfare! Though the head of the body, yet asking for

The old book at Haworth, which was used both for the Society and the Circuit—such as the Circuit then was, affords indubitable proof, that Mr. Grimshaw was not only the *Superintendent* or *Assistant* of the Haworth Circuit, but that he acted in the capacity of *CIRCUIT STEWARD*, and as such regularly kept the *Circuit Accounts*: and to all the other peculiarities of Methodism, which have risen before the reader—risen out of the circumstances of the case—and proceeded with the gradual advance of spring, must be added the novelty of a “*QUARTERLY MEETING*.” This, though the first intimation of any thing of the kind in this part of the country, had been established apparently for some length of time, which is evidently implied by the expression, “At the *next* quarterly meeting.”

Such was the poverty of the Halifax Society at this period, that what had been *lent* to the Members in April was *given* to them in July. The “*law charge*” referred to by Mr. Grimshaw, was probably connected with some indictment for riotous proceedings, as we find “the town in an uproar,” and the “people roaring like the waves of the sea,” during a recent visit from Mr. Wesley.—One of the members at this time, and who afterwards became rather unusually conspicuous, was Titus Knight. He was a poor collier, deeply involved in debt, became acquainted with the Methodists, experienced the renewing power of divine grace, and united himself to the infant—persecuted Society. Among others was a poor woman, who had been blind from childhood, and lived to the advanced age of between eighty and ninety years. When she joined the Society she had but three-halfpence per day allowed her for her maintenance, with part of which she generally contrived to secure, what she deemed one substantial meal of bread and milk towards noon. Out of this regular stipend, however, together with any casual relief which she might obtain, she not only contributed to her class, but even subscribed with the other poor members towards the liquidation of Titus Knight’s debt. She was remonstrated with by her christian friends for giving that which they deemed

no more than food and raiment at the hands of his inferiors! Of all the thousands he might have amassed, and was really said to have amassed, he did not withhold from his acts of benevolence as much as would purchase a pair of shoes, but had to be indebted for a pair to the Haworth Society! While Dr. Johnson was at College, a friend perceiving his penury, delicately placed a pair of shoes at the door of his room for his acceptance; but his haughty spirit spurned them from his path. Pride, in the one case, was linked to poverty; and humility, with all its associate toils, was preferred by the other to wealth and splendour. The moralist may laud the Doctor for true elevation of soul, and may admire his sentiments on the subject of humility, as expressed in his works; but the christian will prefer the practical exposition of the principle as furnished by Mr. Wesley, as best comporting with the example of Him who was “meek and lowly in heart,” and who had “not where to lay his head.”

essential to the supply of her own necessities ; but their remarks availed nothing : her circumstances had reduced the principle of self-denial to a habit, and she possessed a magnanimity of soul which gave an air of wealth to poverty, and produced the effects of benevolence without the enlarged means of relieving the multitude. Her very example was charity, and drew that from others which she could not in every instance effect herself. Through her and others, Titus was enabled to look his creditors in the face ; and when the first "preaching-house," so called, was erected in Halifax, Mr. Wesley, in conjunction with the friends, allowed him the use of it, as a day-school, for the purpose of instructing children. In this way, he was enabled to support himself and his family ; and here it was that his own children first received the knowledge of their letters—one of whom afterwards became a dissenting minister, another a surgeon, and two more entered the established church. One of the latter, was the late Rev. S. Knight, Vicar of Halifax, who also brought up his sons for the Establishment, one of whom is at present a respectable clergyman in Sheffield. Titus soon became an useful local preacher, and in that character he stands in the course of the present year.*

In the month of October, Mr. Wesley visited Lancashire and Cheshire. "Wednesday 18th," says he, "I rode, at the desire of John Bennet, to Rochdale, in Lancashire." As soon as ever we entered the town, we found the streets lined, on both sides, with multitudes of people, shouting, cursing, blaspheming, and gnashing upon us with their teeth. Perceiving it would not be practicable to preach abroad, I went into a large room, open to the street, and called aloud, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.' The word of God prevailed over the fierceness of man. None opposed or interrupted ; and there was a very remarkable change in the behaviour of the people, as we afterwards went through the town.

"We came to Bolton about five in the evening. We had no sooner entered the main street, than we perceived the lions at Rochdale were lambs in comparison of those at Bolton. Such rage and bitterness I scarce ever saw before, in any creatures that bore the form of men. They followed us in full cry to the house where we went ; and as soon as we were gone in, took possession of all the avenues to it, and filled the street from one end to the other. After some

* Myles's Chronol. Hist. p. 447.

time the waves did not roar quite so loud. Mr. P. thought he might then venture out. They immediately closed in, threw him down, and rolled him in the mire; so that when he scrambled from them, and got into the house again, one could scarcely tell what or who he was. When the first stone came among us through the window, I expected a shower to follow, and the rather because they had procured a bell to call their whole forces together; but they did not design to carry on the attack at a distance. Presently one ran up and told us the mob had bursted into the house; he added that they had got J. B. in the midst of them. They had; and he laid hold on the opportunity to tell them of 'the terrors of the Lord.' Meantime D— T— engaged another part of them with smoother and softer words. Believing the time was now come, I walked down into the thickest of them. They had now filled all the rooms below. I called for a chair. The winds were hushed, and all was calm and still. My heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed, they were ashamed, they were melted down, they devoured every word. What a turn was this! O how did God change the counsel of the old Ahithopel into foolishness! and bring all the drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers, and mere sinners in the place, to hear of his plenteous redemption!

"Thursday 19. Abundantly more than the house could contain were present at five in the morning, to whom I was constrained to speak a good deal longer than I am accustomed to do. Perceiving they still wanted to hear, I promised to preach again at nine, in a meadow near the town. Thither they flocked from every side; and I called aloud, 'All things are ready; come unto the marriage.' O how have a few hours changed the scene! We could now walk through every street of the town, and none molested, or opened his mouth, unless to thank or bless us.

"At one I preached at Shackerley, four miles from Bolton, and thence rode on to Davyhulme. Here I received a letter from Richard Cawley, of Alpraham, with an invitation from the Minister of Acton. After preaching in the morning at Davyhulme, and about ten at Boothbank, in the afternoon, Friday the 20th, I rode on, and between four and five came to Alpraham. A large congregation was waiting for me, whom I immediately called to seek 'God while he may be found.' Many came again at five in the morning, and seemed not only just ready to repent, but also 'Believe the Gospel.'

"Saturday 21. By conversing with several here, I found we were not now among publicans and sinners, but among those who awhile ago supposed they, 'needed no repentance.' Many of them had been long 'exercising themselves unto godliness,' in much the same manner as we did at Oxford; but they were now thoroughly willing to renounce their own, and accept 'the righteousness which is of God by faith.'

"A gentleman, who had several years before heard me preach at Bath, sending to invite me to dinner, I had three or four hours' serious conversation with him. O who maketh me to differ? Every objection he made to the christian system has passed through my mind also; but God did not suffer them to rest there, or to remove me from the hope of the Gospel.

"I was not surprized when word was brought me that the Vicar of Acton had not the courage to stand to his word; neither was I troubled. I love indeed to preach in a church; but God can work wherever it pleaseth Him.

"Sunday 22. I preached at seven in Richard Cawley's house; and about one at Little Acton. We then rode on to Woor; and the next afternoon came, wet and weary enough, to Wednesbury.*

Mr. Wesley appears to have proceeded directly from Rochdale to Bolton, without touching at Manchester. This omission seems a little singular at first, when cursorily examined; particularly as there was now an infant Society in the town to invite him, and a place—humble as it was, in which he could give them the meeting; and more especially as he had previously broken down the barrier of those delicacies of feeling and sentiment which appeared to connect themselves with Mr. Clayton, by having preached at Salford-cross. But it is necessary to dive into the depths of the case; and by proceeding beyond the hallowed precincts of religion, the reader will be able to perceive the cause of omission in the spirit of the times, and in the opposite political opinions of the two men. Mr. Wesley knew that he could not often repeat his visits to Manchester without coming into contact with his old collegiate friend; and had accident thrown them together at this time, he might have indirectly subjected himself to part of the odium under which the latter was partially labouring.

* Journals, 8vo. edit. published in numbers, p. 124, for the year 1749. It is remarkable that this account should be omitted in the early 12mo. editions of the Journals, as published in connexion with his other works.

Few places had suffered more, through political squabbles, during the period of the Scotch Rebellion than Manchester; and Mr. Clayton, who was far from standing alone in the Establishment, warmly espoused the Jacobite side of the question. While Prince Charles was at the Palace Inn, he paid his personal respects to him, and in the view of the Whigs, was characterized as his domestic chaplain. Whitworth's "*Manchester Magazine*" was the only newspaper published in the town; and its editor refused to print for the Pretender and his party. The consequence was, that the friends of the House of Stewart were obliged to send every article, however small, to the city of Chester, where it met with a ready insertion in the "*Chester Courant*,"—a three days' job in those days of bad roads. These inconveniences were remedied by the late Mr. Joseph Harrop, who had been an apprentice with Whitworth, and who is said to have been assisted by Mr. Clayton and others to procure a press, and set up in opposition to his late master. The Whig party—though with what degree of justice is unknown, considered Mr. Clayton as a contributor to the materials which filled Mr. Harrop's paper. The "war of words" was maintained with the greatest acrimony from the period of the Rebellion to the termination of 1748; and in the course of this year the papers were collected, and presented to the public, in a 12mo volume of 324 pages.* It was a period when it was almost impossible for a man to neutralize either his sentiments or his conduct; and in the act of filing off, whether to the right or to the left, he was certain to receive an arrow from the bow of an archer. Mr. Clayton, as a public character, had not the smallest chance of escape. Accordingly, in a paper addressed to Mr. Whitworth, for insertion in the "*Manchester Magazine*," dated Nov. 20, 1746, professing to be a reply to another which had appeared in the "*Chester Courant*," he meets with a public rebuke. The writer, adverting to some expressions hostile to government, observes, "But that the sober as well as the drunken have been guilty of this practice, we had a most indecent instance, among many others, in one of Mr. C—'s senior scholars,† who, about two *Sundays ago*, affronted a lady at the close of the service of the church, with a *Down with the Rump*, more than once,—but this is very pardonable in the scholar, since

* It is becoming rather scarce, and is entitled "MANCHESTER VINDICATED: being a Compleat COLLECTION of the PAPERS lately published in Defence of that TOWN, in the *Chester Courant*. Together with all those on the other Side of the QUESTION, printed in the *Manchester Magazine*, or elsewhere, which are answered in the said *Chester Courant*. CHES-TER: Printed by and for Eliz. Adams. 1749."

† Mr. Clayton kept a School in Salford.

that was a health at the Master's Table."* On the 10th of Nov. 1747, another allusion is made to Mr. Clayton in an article which appeared in the "Chester Courant," where the writer notices "The Rector and Curates of St. A—'s,"† whom he ironically exempts from disloyalty. The subject was again revived many years afterward, in a caricature which may possibly be noticed at the period of its publication, and in which—as in all such cases where party spirit is in operation, Mr. Clayton was exhibited in not the most favourable light. Mr. Wesley, on the other hand, gave a decided preference to the House of Brunswick. The Rebellion compelled them both to show their colours; and as Mr. Clayton differed with Mr. Wesley on the subject of religion, and had withdrawn from him his countenance and support; so Mr. Wesley might be equally disinclined to sanction him in his views on the subject of civil government. For them to have met at present would have probably been to the discomfort of both, and might possibly have added to the distance which already subsisted. Though Mr. Wesley, after he began to itinerate, was doubtlessly deterred some time from entering Manchester, because of Mr. Clayton's partial coldness; yet, having once overstepped the line of demarkation, there appeared no substantial reason why an interview should not take place. The three years' political contest affords a more satisfactory explanation of such perpetuated distance, than any other argument that can be offered. Mr. Wesley entered the town in the spring of 1747, when it was nearly at its zenith; and he had seen and heard too much of the spirit which it engendered in his travels, to approach the fire when it could be avoided. Though the Established Church and the Presbyterians, are noticed as having taken high ground on the occasion in the town, the Methodists are never once introduced; a proof either of the simplicity of their demeanour, or the insignificance of their numbers.

There appears to have been a speciality about this visit, which scarcely reached any of those that preceded. In one, Mr. Wesley is observed to have "*Accompanied John Bennet into Lancashire;*" and in another, to have "*preached at several places in Lancashire and Cheshire, at John Bennet's request.*" But this was not a *general* visit to the several Societies; many important places to the right and to the left, as well as on their route, were omitted; and Rochdale, in connexion with Bolton, were the particular objects of attention.

* Ibid. p. 20.

† Manchester Vind. p. 279.

The tumultuous conduct of the people will show, that the friends of Methodism in each place, could not be in circumstances the most comfortable, while such hostile feelings were in operation. But "the *desire* of John Bennet" was to accomplish another object. He had entered into the marriage state little more than a fortnight before, with a person for whom Mr. Wesley entertained the highest esteem, and to whom, there was some reason to believe, he intended to offer his hand.* Mr. Charles Wesley not altogether approving of the connexion, and afraid of its consummation during the visit of his brother to the north, hastened, if not partly contrived, another union in order to defeat his design. John Bennet was therefore married to the female, whose name was Mrs. Grace Murray, in the parish-church of St. Andrew's, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in the presence of the Rev. Charles Wesley and the Rev. George Whitfield, Oct. 3d, 1749. Some verses† which were written by Mr. John Wesley on the occasion, in the course of the same month, afford strong indications of the poignancy of his feelings. Those feelings, however, were so chastised by the grace of God, as to save him from resentment, and preserve him in the regular exercise of the ministry. At Bolton in particular, which was afterwards permitted to be the scene of religious dissension, by the man who was the instrument of conducting him thither, he was under an extraordinary influence of God. John Bennet having known something of his respect for Mrs. Grace Murray, and feeling it a duty to tone down his feelings by his attentions, seemed to cling to him like a person, who, after he had accomplished an object, was disposed to make reparation; and to cling the more, lest, while absent, some one should reach his ear and his heart, and affect them in a way the least to his advantage. Considering the whole of the case, few men besides himself could have been found, who would have so soon entered the society of a man from whom such injury had been received. But as *John Bennet* had *desired* him to take the journey, he would rather make any sacrifice than hazard even the *appearance* of improper feeling. This almost unexampled instance of magnanimity and forbearance, may be adduced by Mr. Southey as one among the many practical proofs of the correctness of his opinion, that "*Resentment* was a plant that *could never take root* in the heart of Wesley." And when-

* See Wesleyan Meth. in Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 78.

† Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. 1, p. 523; vol. 2, p. 164.

ever any circumstance of a hostile character turns up on the part of John Bennet, the reader must return hither, and look for the secret,—though he had by far the least reason to complain. Mr. Wesley continued to employ him in the work, and introduces him in the scene at Bolton, in the same way as any writer would introduce an important personage into a dramatic representation, whose presence was absolutely necessary for the perfection of the plot, and who was complimented for his services, just the same as though nothing had occurred to induce the one to break faith with the other. This is one view of this painful subject which has never yet appeared before the public; and it would place some persons in rather an awkward predicament, who have been in the habit of fastening upon some minor blemishes in the conduct of this great and good man—blemishes which have only existed in imagination, and which it would have been their felicity to have found in reality, to bring themselves to this test, and to see whether they could have summoned forth as much grace as would have enabled them to acquit themselves in an equally christian manner. The more his conduct is sifted, the more unmixed will appear the character of his piety. Mr. Moore, out of tenderness to Mr. Charles Wesley, observes, that “The high character of those concerned, forbids the imputation of any corrupt motive.” True, there might be no “*corrupt motive*,” while there might exist a *misiaken judgment*, and following which, a train of *groundless fears*. But the judgment in such case, and especially where the tenderest feelings—and perhaps the permanent peace of another are at stake, should be suspended. His motives might even have been *good*, since he judged it right to stop his erring brother, as he supposed, in his career of precipitate folly. But his conduct was wrong—as wrong as the conduct of the man who would stop a runaway steed, and seizing by the stirrup instead of the bridle, receives injury himself instead of accomplishing his purpose. It is impossible fully to exculpate Charles, though out of mercy to his brother—for it only snatched him from imaginary evil—evil which could not possibly exist in an union with a female of such sterling worth, to throw him into the fire by an union with another. The whole appears to have been a well-meant but ill-judged scheme of Charles’s—towards the slow accomplishment of which Mr. Whitfield was detained a day beyond his time in Newcastle—and the better to sanction it, as well as to prevent his standing alone in the offence, if such it should turn out, Mr. Whitfield was pre-

sent at the ceremony. If Mr. John had avowed his intentions to his brother, and not fully unfolded them to Mrs. M—, she was less culpable; but the delay alluded to, would indicate a difficulty in the preliminaries. But whatever may become of the others, the Head of the Methodist body—and it is to him the Methodists are to look, rose out of the whole like an angel of light.

Mr. Wesley's omission of Manchester was satisfactorily supplied by the Rev. George Whitfield, in whose letters several notices of the town and neighbourhood are to be found. In a letter to Captain W—, from Newcastle, dated Sept. 29, 1749, he remarks, "Since I last wrote to you, I have had many proofs that God's providence directed my way into Yorkshire. I preached four times at Abberford, four times at Leeds, and thrice at Haworth, where lives one Mr. G—" (Grimshaw). After introducing the same subject in a letter to Lady Huntingdon, dated Oct. 1, from the same place, he observes, "At Mr. G—'s, I believe there were above six thousand hearers. The sacramental occasion was most awful. At Leeds the congregation consisted of above 10,000. In the morning, at five, I was obliged to preach out of doors. I was invited to Leeds by one of Mr. W—'s (Wesley) preachers, and by all his people. The gospel was welcome to them. In my way hither I met Mr. Charles W—, (Wesley) who returned back with, and introduced me to the pulpit in Newcastle. As I am a debtor to all, and intend to be at the head of no party, I thought it my duty to comply. I have preached now, in their room, four times, and this morning I preached to many thousands in a large close. This evening I am to do the same again. The power of God has attended his own word, and there seems to be a quickening and stirring among the souls. To-morrow, God willing, we set out for Leeds."*

Whatever might have been Mr. Whitfield's intention of leaving Newcastle the day after the date of his letter to the Countess, it is pretty certain he did not leave the town till the 3d of the month, on which day he was at the nuptial ceremony of John Bennet, and to attend which, as already stated, was probably the occasion of his protracted stay. His intention to return on the second, is repeated to Lady Fanny S—†, and the reason assigned by Dr. Gillies, for his not proceeding further north, was the lateness of the season.‡

In one of the letters referred to, the number of communicants at Haworth is computed to have been "above a thou-

* Whitfield's Works, vol. 2, p. 282-3.

† Works, vol. 2, p. 284.

‡ Vol. 7, p. 182.

sand;" and to the "six thousand hearers," he seems to have preached in the church-yard. The sacramental occasions were seasons of great festivity as well as solemnity; persons resorted to Haworth at such times from twenty to thirty miles round the country; and from the numbers that attended, there appears some ground for the truth of the report, which goes to state, that both the vestry and the inhabitants were on one occasion drained of wine. This would have been a fine subject for Mr. George White to have descanted upon, had there not been an unfortunate set off against it, in the smallness of the place, and the general poverty of the people, but few of whom could afford to keep the juice of the grape, and those who possessed it, being able only to preserve it in small quantities. Should the reported dearth ever have taken place, and only have extended to the vestry, it was as likely to have occurred on this occasion as any other, as it can scarcely be conceived that such an influx would enter into their calculations, and that provision should be made for the necessities of the case.

The feelings which the disputed points had excited between Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Wesley, among their separate followers, were now beginning to expend their strength; and Mr. Whitfield seemed to exult in an invitation to preach, not only from "Mr. Wesley's Societies," but from "one of the preachers," the triumphant climax of which appeared to be—"Mr. Charles Wesley coming thither published me himself."

On Mr. Whitfield's return from the north, the first place in which he is to be found is, "Estwood in Lancashire," from whence he writes "To Lady F—— S——," and dates his letter, Oct. 25th. He seems generally to have set in with a full tide; and though interrupted with an occasional surge, when the water was breaking around him, he was still to be seen swelling onward with the wave that bore him, and was never so far disconcerted as to be unable to attend to his usual arithmetical calculations of "crowds"—"multitudes"—"thousands"—and "tens of thousands," or to be prevented from placing the trumpet to his lips, and with a blast—which was far from being an "uncertain sound," pouring his notes into the ears of his friends, composed of lords and ladies, and other honourables, which again were heard echoing through the land and over the seas, and thus preserving others, with himself, on the move and in the bustle. But it too often resolved itself into present effect, and for want of system, the stirring qualities of his cause were doomed but a

short time to survive himself. Nevertheless, it *was* effect—and was *permanent* with the individual. “Since,” says he, addressing the above personage, “I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship from Newcastle, fresh wonders of grace and mercy have been shewn us daily. I have now, I think, preached about thirty times in Yorkshire, and above ten times in Cheshire and Lancashire. Congregations have been very large, and a solid, convincing, and comforting influence hath every where attended the word. In one or two places I have had a little rough treatment, but elsewhere all has been quiet, and many I hear are brought under concern about the welfare of their better part. At the importunity of many, I am now returning from Manchester (where I preached to many thousands) to Leeds; from thence I purpose going to Sheffield, and next week I hope to see good Lady H——n, at Ashby, and the week following I hope to be in London.——Mrs. G——, at Manchester, goes on well, and is not ashamed to confess Him, who I trust has called her out of darkness, and made her partaker of marvellous light. May the glorious Emmanuel add daily to the number of his honourable confessors, and give the rich to know, that to be rich in faith and good works is the only way to be rich indeed!”*

He was at Halifax on the 25th, and in a letter from thence “To the Countess D——,” he observes, “Though I am jealous of myself, lest I should make too free with persons in high life, yet when I have good news to send concerning the kingdom of Jesus Christ, I am constrained as it were to write to your Ladyship. Will it not rejoice you very much, honoured Madam, to hear the glorious Emmanuel is riding on in the chariot of his gospel, from conquering to conquer? Every day people flock to hear the word, like doves to their windows. I have preached about thirty times in Yorkshire, and at the desire of many am returned thither again. The latter end of next week I hope to see good Lady H——. I suppose her Ladyship will detain me a few days at Ashby.——It is our privilege to go on from grace to grace, till grace be swallowed up in endless glory. O that your honored sister may march on with your Ladyship towards this blessed state! There she will have a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I send her Ladyship my most dutiful respects.”†

On his arrival at Leeds, he wrote “to Lady Hunting-

* Works, vol. 2, p. 235.

† Works, vol. 2, p. 286.

don," the letter bearing date of the 30th. In this he remarks, "On Saturday evening I had the honour of your Ladyship's letter, and as it came before the Manchester post went out, I immediately sent the enclosed to Mrs. G——. If possible, I am persuaded she will comply. She seems to be quite in earnest. I conversed for about two hours with the Captain and some other Officers, upon the nature and necessity of the new birth. He was affected, and I hope it was blessed. Since I left them, I have preached to many thousands at Rossendale, Aywood (probably Ewood) and Halifax."*

The letters of this good man are not only extremely common-place, but possessed of great sameness, and remind the reader of the gentleman noticed in Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, whose cheap mode of remark—in going repeatedly either over his own ground or that of others, is compared to a person making the best of his way home again in a return chaise at half-price. The object of the compilers appears to have been that of multiplicity rather than selection, through which, men, of whose intellects Mr. Whitfield possessed but a title, have been destined to suffer frequently in their literary reputation. The facts, however, whether repeated to a second, third, fourth, or fifth person, and published in the same volume, will always be interesting. A case unnoticed by him till December 19th, is worth recording.

He writes from London, to a Mr. N. of Glasgow; and it is probably owing to the circumstance of the sufferer being a countryman of his correspondents, that the subject is introduced at all. "It is now almost an age," says he, "since I wrote to you. Providence prevented my seeing you when last in the North, and ever since, business has kept me from writing! However, blessed be God, I can send you good news now I do write. For near three months I have preached in many places, and thousands and ten thousands flocked to hear the glorious gospel. I have since had repeated letters of the impressions abiding upon the heart of many. Not unto me, not unto me, O Lord, but unto thy free grace be all the glory! At Haworth I met with William Davy (Darney), who has since been imprisoned for preaching. Though he is seemingly unqualified, yet I meet with many that date their awakening from their first hearing him. What shall we say to these things? Even so, Father, for it seemeth good in thy sight! I think he belongs to our Lord's family; and therefore what is done for him, he will take as done to himself."†

* Works, vol. 2, p. 287.

† Ibid, p. 306.

William Darney published an account of his imprisonment afterwards, and in that account, the magistrates and others concerned in the transaction, appear to have possessed but little of either justice or mercy,—a case not uncommon during the first steps of Methodism.

Before the effervescence had passed away occasioned by Mr. Whitfield's visits, and the people had settled down into something like solid feeling, Mr. Christopher Hopper arrived from the north of England. Mr. Hopper having been conversant with the work of God in these parts about this period, was often in the habit of supplying the information in his public discourses, which he omitted to insert in the sketch of his life; and this, to the junior preachers especially, was always interesting on public occasions. It was thus, that he addressed his auditories at Leeds and Halifax, in after life, as he had done at Manchester, in reference to the first preaching-room; and through the reminiscences of those who heard him in each place, a faithful picture is presented to the contemplative mind of the scenes which came under the observation of this humble, yet exalted traveller.

“The venerable Christopher Hopper,” says Mr. Moore, “after many years of arduous labour, was preaching in Leeds, a few years after the death of Mr. Wesley. The Conference was then assembled at that place. The Chapels were full, and several Preachers were preaching abroad at the same time. He observed, ‘Just fifty years ago I opened my commission in a Barber’s shop in this town—the shop of William Shent. I had just as many hearers as the shop would contain. There the Lord sowed *the grain of mustard seed*! Behold what it has come to!’ Great was our rejoicing in the Lord!”* On leaving Leeds, at which place he had “spent a few days,” he next proceeded to Birstal, where he preached “on the top of the hill, before the foundation of the Preaching-house was laid.” From thence, he observes, in his journal, “I rode on to Halifax, and found their little Society at Skircoat-green. God gave us a blessing. I then rode to Rochdale and preached in the evening, at the widow Whittaker’s, to as many as the house could contain. They were turbulent enough, but we were not afraid; for God was with us.†” Then follows his notice of Manchester, to which allusion has been made. After he had become Supernumerary, and while preaching in Halifax, he added two or three particulars which are worth preserving. “When I first rode into Halifax, I inquired whether there were any Methodists in the town, but I could

* Life of Mr. Wesley, vol. 2, p. 17.

† Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 90.

not meet with any one for some time who could inform me. At length a person directed me to Abraham Kershaw's, of Skircoat-green, intimating, with apparent satisfaction, that there were no such characters in Halifax. I then rode on to Rochdale, a distance of 16 miles, before I could find another." He then added, with a little pleasantry, "I found Methodism in Rochdale, in a *cellar*, and in Manchester, I met with it in a *garret*," to which he might have appended, and in Leeds, in a *Barber's shop*—an introduction not a little odd in its associations.

The grant of money from the Haworth to the "Halifax Society," in the course of this year, as entered on the Haworth Society Book, would suppose a Society to have been already formed in the town. But the case seems to have been this, that the professors of Methodism in Halifax and Skircoat-green, being only a mile distant from each other, were blended in one—that the members were less numerous in the former than in the latter place, and were therefore less known and noticed by the populace—that, from the poverty of the members in Halifax, there was no one capable of entertaining the Preachers, in consequence of which, they were received by Mr. Abraham Kershaw of Skircoat-green, who, from his opulence and connexion with the Methodists, would naturally attract general attention—that, owing to the opposition with which Methodism met in the town, the private meetings were generally held at Skircoat-green—and that, from the town of Halifax being much better known than an insignificant place in its immediate vicinity, the Society more frequently received the name of the Halifax Society than that of Skircoat-green. By strangers at least, it would be more frequently identified with the town than the village: and not less than this is implied in the words of Mr. Hopper, when he says, "I rode on to Halifax and found *their* little Society at Skircoat-green."

Mr. James Kershaw, who entered the itinerant life in 1752, was related to Mr. Abraham Kershaw, and must have joined the society at no great distance from this period.

In the evening of the day on which Mr. Hopper entered Manchester, he preached in the celebrated "*garret*."

For the number of his auditors, the reader must turn to some of the earlier pages of this work. Small, however, as was the first congregation, he was not, even on a small scale, without encouraging prospects. "The congregation," says he, "multiplied every meeting. On the sabbath-day, the place would not contain them. The multitude was impatient to hear. The old wooden house shook under us, and put the congregation in confusion. Many trembled, and some

believed. The next evening they procured me an Anabaptist Meeting-house. The place was crowded. They heard with attention. Many were awakened, and joined themselves to seek and worship God."*

The slight discrepancy between the accounts of Thomas Berry and Mr. Hopper, relative to the *materials* of which the building was composed, the one stating it to have been built of *brick*, and the other characterizing it as a "*wooden house*," may be reconciled on the supposition of its having been constructed partly of both; bricks having been employed for the purpose of filling the interstices between the timbers that formed the *frame* of the building: and none of the adjoining buildings having had the spaces filled up with the same material, it might be described as composed of brick in contradistinction to the others, while Mr. Hopper might have as naturally been led to the wood, from the fact of some of the principal beams of the frame-work having given way.

Report states, that some persons hostile to the Methodists, had contrived to saw one of the principal timbers upon which the floor rested nearly in two halves, and that the floor sunk considerably below its level. But this could not have been effected by others than the inmates of the dwelling, without detection; and the inmates themselves would never have done it; for supposing them to have contemplated their absence at the time of its intended downfall, they would not have been so inconsiderate as to have unhoused themselves in the cold month of November or December, and to have destroyed their household property. Besides, Mr. Hopper remarks, not that the floor *sunk*, but that "*The old wooden house shook*"—shook because of its *age*—its decayed timbers being unable to support the weight of a "*multiplied congregation*," and a "*multitude impatient to hear*." On the event of its fall, they must—since the building projected over the rock, have been precipitated from their giddy height into the river. They were beheld for the moment, poized, as it were, in air; for they could scarcely be said to have a foundation—at least, only such an one as was rocking beneath them. Like one of those avalanches,—those immense accumulations of ice and snow, balanced on the verge of the mountains of Switzerland in such subtle suspense, that, in the opinion of the natives, the tread of the traveller may bring them down in destruction upon him; so here, the spontaneous rush of a single person to the door, might have been the signal for

* Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 9L.

others, and one general crash had been the result. But a merciful Providence was at hand to furnish the Preacher with presence of mind, and to tranquilize the breasts of the people: and yet, what a moment of suspense! a moment in which time and eternity seemed to meet, and in which all the glorious or tremendous realities of each concentrated! Mr. Hopper requested them quietly to retire, suggesting that by so doing they might save their lives. The advice was taken, and not the least injury was sustained.

The Rev. John Collins, the nephew of the venerable Richard Barlow, states in a M. S. with which he furnished the writer of this history—and he had his knowledge from the fountain-head, that “The Members in Society at this time, chiefly consisted of elderly women.” To their firm and matronly example, such as were younger in years might, under God, be partially indebted for their preservation. The “young men” who took the room, would doubtlessly be present, and also Mr. Richard Barlow, who joined the Society in 1747, just after its formation. Among others was old Mrs. Hope, of Liverpool, still living, (1827) mother of Mrs. Byron, the former being then a child in her mother’s arms. When the reader considers that love of life which is natural to all, and which prompts to an immediate escape from danger, and when the mixed character of the hearers is superadded to such a principle—some of whom, as guilty sinners before God, had every thing to fear, in reference to a future state, the surprise will be, how they were preserved at all, not from the falling of the building—though that was sufficiently perilous, but how, even on the supposition of its stability, they were preserved from precipitate flight, and from crushing each other to death. Much less cause of alarm has produced the most afflictive consequences in Methodist chapels since that day,—and to *that* day—the day of its infancy, we must again return, and return at the same time, and in this particular case too, to the special providence of God for a solution.

Being now without a place of worship, and perhaps without the smallest prospect of any, their song of praise for deliverance might, in the mouths of others than themselves, have passed from a sprightly air to a solemn dirge. But opportunity was scarcely afforded, for the purpose of enabling them either to change the time or the key note. The very “*next evening*,” an “Anabaptist Meeting-house” was procured. This “Meeting-house” was a chapel near Withy-Grove, in the district called Cold-house; in which the Rev. — Winterbotham officiated. Mr. Hopper states the

Chapel to have been "*procured*," implying application; another account states Mr. Winterbotham to have volunteered the use of it, till another place could be obtained: but which ever way it was, it reflects high honour on the christian liberality of both the pastor and his flock, who could so far do violence to their feelings as to participate in the reproach of an infant sect, which was despised and persecuted both by rich and poor, by furnishing them with an asylum in their "day of trouble;"—and the *place* in which they were thus sheltered, and the *people* by whom they were thus countenanced—and countenanced too, in despite of the scoffs and violence of those around them, ought never, in the day of *necessity*—should they ever be permitted to see that day, to go unrequited and unblest by the members of the Manchester Methodist Society. With both the Methodists and Baptists, it must have been the day of small and feeble things; for the chapel, when visited Oct. 19th, 1826, and which was then rebuilding, did not appear so large as the one half of the Morning Chapel in Oldham-street, with a gallery only at one end of the building.

From the extensive range of country over which the Preachers then passed, it is likely that John Maddern, a native of Cornwall, who entered the work in 1742, extended his labours to Manchester in 1749. He is represented as exercising his ministry in Staffordshire at this period;* and as yet, there was no title given to an immense extent of ground, besides that of "John Bennet's round," which comprised Chinley, in Derbyshire,—Macclesfield, in Cheshire,—Burslem, in Staffordshire,—Alpraham,—Chester,—Holywell, in Flintshire,—passing over the rising town of Liverpool,—onward to Whitehaven, in Cumberland,—and back to Bolton, in Lancashire, Manchester and Chinley, including many of the intermediate towns and villages.† The kingdom, it is true, appears divided into twenty circuits this year, in the Minutes,‡ in which Staffordshire is distinct; but many of the particulars assigned to this year in those records, belonged to subsequent periods,§ and this division of Circuits bears the character of one of them,—the thing itself implying too much *system* and *maturity* for this early stage of the work, as well as more *labourers* than can reasonably be supposed to have entered the field. Such labourers, however, as were actually employed, were for the major part

* Atmore's Memorial, p. 247. † See Meth. in Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 261. ‡ Vol. 1, p. 40.

‡ This is entered into at length, in Methodism in Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 267; also p. 83, 161.

of a genuine stamp, and John Maddern was one of them. His piety was unquestionable, and this, connected with sprightliness and zeal, rendered him acceptable to the people, as well as useful. His talents were such as entitled him to the appellation of a "good Preacher." The precise time and circumstances of his death are without memorial; but he is stated to have travelled "a few years," and to have "finished his course with joy."

CHAPTER VIII.

Messrs. E. Perronet and D. Taylor—Mr. Wesley's visit to Alpraham—Mr.

Richard Cawley's account of his own conversion—Address to a clergyman—Further account of the original Society at Bunbury and Alpraham, with notices of some of its members—Defences of the cause and doctrines espoused—Mr. Richard Cawley's public, domestic, and private character—Rules for the regulation of a family—Reproof—A letter to R. Davenport, Esq.—Mr. Thomas Hilditch—A detailed account of the causes which led to Mr. Cawley's invitation to Mr. Wesley.

AMONG those who exercised the Christian Ministry in this neighbourhood, during 1749, were two persons, the initials of whose names are given by Mr. Wesley, on his late visit to Bolton; the one "Mr. P." who was as much disfigured by the rude hand of the mob, and as difficult to be recognised, as some of the papers which have been consulted for the composition of these pages have been to decipher, through coats of accumulated dust, so plentifully showered upon them by the hand of time; and the other "D— T—," who engaged a part of the multitude "with smoother and softer words" than had been employed by previous speakers. Different circumstances go to prove, that the first of the persons referred to, was Mr. Edward Perronet. Previously to Mr. Wesley's visit to Bolton, he remarks, "I left all my company but Mr. Perronet at Hinley-Hill, and set out for Whitehaven."* Accompanied by Mr. P. he proceeded from place to place, till he arrived at the town in question.

Edward was the brother of Charles, and the son of the venerable Vincent Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham. Both of the sons were itinerant preachers, and laboured in union with Mr. Wesley some years. Charles was particularly distinguished for strength of understanding, feebleness of consti-

* Journal for 1749, p. 117.

tution, and a profound acquaintance with the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Edward, on the other hand, possessed of equal intellectual powers, could boast of a large fund of wit. Through the indulgence of the latter, which must ever be dangerous to those who do not live under the sacred and benevolent influences of the Spirit of God, he was led, not only by playful sallies, but occasionally by some of the keenest strokes, into various freedoms, which but ill became the sanctity of the ministerial character, and were not at all adapted to promote the sublime ends proposed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is to this talent, that "The Mitre" must be attributed—a Poem which is said to have been written by him, but the publication of which was suppressed through the influence of Mr. Wesley, because of the bitterness of its satire on the National Establishment;—it was this that led to his separation from Mr. Wesley, and to his residence at Canterbury, where he preached to a small congregation of Dissenters, and where, as Editor of a provincial newspaper, he availed himself of the privilege to which his office entitled him, of lampooning those whom he deemed the enthusiastic supporters of Church and State;—and it is to the free indulgence of this that many of his personal discomforts must be ascribed, as well as the tardiness of his pace in the path of practical and experimental religion. He appears to have had a strong relish for any thing powerful, severe, and personal, and to have enjoyed them at the expence of both good taste and christian charity. With these, his portfolio groaned, both as the production of his own pen, and from the pens of others.* To proscribe wit, would be as rash

* As specimens of the food in which his soul delighted, and a key to his intellectual character, the two following pieces, in his own hand writing, have been selected from his papers. The first is an extract, which he appears to have copied, with a view of increasing his stock of literary curiosities, and is entitled by him, "An Epitaph over a wicked Man's Tomb,"—from the Northern Journey, by one Dr. WILD, a man as wild as his Name. Printed for the Booksellers in London, A. D. 1668, p. 46.

"Here lies the Carcase of a cursed Sinner,
Doom'd to be roasted for the *Devil's* Dinner!
Who, proud to think, the *Dainty* he had got,
Fasted a fortnight at the very *Thought*:
Then sitting down—(on either hand a *Cup*),
He fell to work, and eat the Sinner up."

"N. B. At page 84 of this strange performance, is one entitled, 'The Loyal Nonconformist,' which, for wit, good sense, and truth, is worth all the rest of the Book put together." Written June 7, 1791.

The second piece is dated "Canty. Th. July 28, 1791," and is entitled, "The Downfall of Antichrist, in the Person of the Pope—Cardinals—Bishops—Catholic Priests—Impostors—and Mercenaries of the Church of Rome. See Revelation 18, 2.

"Down from his height shall he be hurld,
All headlong to the flaming world:
There the damned Ghosts shall fright him,
And the Devils bark, and bite him.
Spectre'd Demons shall appal him,
And with iron mallets maul him;
Ghastly Fiends shall *ganging* spurn him,

as the improper exercise of it is reprehensible :* but a great deal of prudence and forbearance are necessary, in order to its timing and direction ; and from the dangers attendant on its employment, its possessors are more frequently objects of pity than of envy, and seldom fail to render themselves subjects of dread and of hatred. On Mr. Perronet leaving this neighbourhood, he seems at the same time to have left Mr. Wesley to pursue his route, and to have proceeded from hence to Sheffield, where he was labouring October 26th.†

The other person, of "smoother and softer words," was David Taylor. It is matter of doubt, whether, by "smoother and softer words," there is a reference to the mild character of his preaching, or his state of mind : and yet, unless he had been roused from the "*German stillness*" into which he had fallen, and of which Mr. Wesley had taken previous notice,‡ the conclusion would be in favour of the latter. Notwithstanding David's occasional fluctuations in zeal, he did a great and a good work in his day, and is entitled to high honour, as he nearly stood alone at the commencement of Methodism, in those places which were the more immediate scenes of his labours. He appears to have originally acted in the capacity of butler to Lady Betty Hastings,§ and

While the scorching torches burn him :
There the Brimstone Lime-kilns melt him,
And hot thunderbolts shall pelt him :
Priests and Cardinals all grumbling,
One and all together tumbling :—
Friars, Monks, and Nuns attending,
Over neck and heels descending ;
While a black sulphureous cloud
Covers all the midnight crowd,
Following their great Leader, where
Dwells Perdition, and Despair,
To the Pit, whence no returning,
Ever broiling—ever burning !
Such the State, and such the Doom,
Of the MAN OF SIN and ROME !"

On the cover of this document, is written by another pen, "The supposed production of Mr. E. P.—C."

* Mr. Wesley's father, in "An Epistle to a Friend, concerning Poetry," describes Wit thus:—

"As *Genius* is the *Strength*, be *WIT* defined
The *Beauty*, and the *Harmony* of *Mind* :
Beauty's proportion, *Air*, each lively *Grace*
The *Soul* diffuses round the *Heav'nly Face* :
'Tis *various*, yet 'tis *equal*, still the same
In *Alpine Snows*, or *Ethiopian Flame* ;
While *glaring Colours* short liv'd *Grace* supply,
Nor *Frost* nor *Sun* they bear, but *scorch* and *die*."

By another writer of the same age, it is said,—

"*Wit* is a *Radiant Spark* of *Heav'nly Fire*,
Full of *Delight*, and worthy of *Desire* :
Bright as the *Ruler* of the *Realms* of *Day*,
Sun of the *Soul*, with *in-born Beauties* gay."

† Sketches of Wesleyan Meth. Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 80.

‡ Ibid. p. 23.45.

§ Ibid. p. 4.

afterwards to have entered the service of the Countess of Huntingdon, who warmly espoused the views of Messrs. Whitfield and Wesley, and exerted all the influence which her rank and fortune gave her, to promote their success.

"David," it is said, "residing with her ladyship at Donnington Park, in Leicestershire, having himself tasted that the Lord was gracious, was occasionally employed under her sanction, in preaching in the neighbourhood. In these benevolent excursions, he visited, in 1741,* Glenfield and Ratley, two villages near Leicester. Curiosity led many to hear this famous preacher, and his new doctrine; and amongst the rest, Mr. Samuel Deacon, of Ratley aforesaid, for many years pastor of the General Baptist Church at Barton. Being informed when at work in the field, that a person had been preaching in the street at Glenfield, and was going to preach again at Ratley, he laid his scythe down, and went to hear him. This sermon made a lasting impression on his mind, and induced him to search the Scriptures. The dissoluteness and ignorance of the Clergyman now struck him in a new light, and he began to reflect on his own danger, as part of the flock of so careless a shepherd. After much reasoning, reading, and perplexity, he was enabled to rely on Christ alone for salvation, and immediately found peace and joy in believing. About this time, the Countess of Huntingdon judging that David Taylor would be more useful as a preacher, if set at liberty from other engagements, dismissed him from her service. His visits became more and more frequent at Ratley and Glenfield, and several were awakened to a sense of divine things. In the following year, he was accompanied by Stephen Dixon, a fellow labourer; and their united exertions were blest with increasing success. Several of their followers attempted to teach, as well as they were able, the way of salvation to others. Two schoolmasters from Markfield, John Taylor and C. Clapham, were frequently employed in this good work at Ratley, to which village one of them removed, and formed a Society on the plan of the Methodists.

"It should be remarked, that David Taylor began to preach before the Wesleys came into these parts, and travelled through four counties every month, and was much followed; and as he did not meddle with disputed points, he

* Wesleyan Meth. Sheffield. Where it appears he visited the neighbourhood of Sheffield in 1738; probably under the patronage, and through the support of her Ladyship, which removes in that work, vol. 1, p. 4, a difficulty relative to his situation and subsistence, for which, with the materials then possessed, it was impossible to account.

had quiet meetings, only striving to turn the wicked from the evil of their ways."*

The initials of Mr. Perronet's name might be given, probably, because of its having been noticed in full by Mr. Wesley a short time before, where it would be easy for the reader to identify the same person; and David Taylor's might only be inserted in initials, from the circumstance of his not being fully united with the Methodist body. He nevertheless bestowed an occasional day's labour on the Wesleyan vineyard; and from the multiplicity of hands engaged in these parts at this period, it was not unreasonable to expect a more than usual crop of christian fruit.

In the account of Mr. Wesley's last visit, he is observed to have "Received a letter from Richard Cawley, of Alpraham, with an invitation from the Minister of Acton." Thither he proceeded from Bolton; and there, on this his first visit, he appears to have excited no small interest. "*Many*" of the persons with whom he met, and some of whom there is reason to believe constituted a part of the original Society which met in the vestry, were considered as bearing a close resemblance to the Society in "*Oxford*," of which he himself had been a member, having "*been long* exercising themselves to godliness in much the same manner." Of this Society at Alpraham, in its head, its progress, its views, its members, and some of the difficulties and conquests it had achieved, a more circumstantial account appears to be necessary. There is a peculiarity in the notice it receives from Mr. Wesley; and the papers which Mr. R. Cawley has left, will tend to throw light upon its character. Some notice has been already taken of its origin, and also of the character of Mr. Cawley; but of the former, there are some circumstances which yet remain untold, and of the conversion of the latter, no detailed account has been given.

Though Mr. Cawley was desirous both of doing and receiving good, when the first Society was formed, yet it was not till some time after its establishment, and possibly its dissolution, that he experienced the renewing power of divine grace. He was born in 1716, and was naturally of a hasty spirit. His own account of his conversion, in a letter to the clergyman of the parish, is as follows, left in M. S. by himself.

"Reverend Sir,

"As there is not any thing in the world gives me greater

* Baptist Magazine for March, 1819.

satisfaction, nor tends more to my advantage, than to hear the uncorrupted gospel preached plainly, and applied closely, and especially by the ministers of that church of which I am an unworthy member; so, not any thing gives me more uneasiness than to find its light obscured, its beauty tarnished, its meaning and intention perverted, and each person left without his portion being divided to him, the whole remaining unapplied.

“Some time ago I gave you a testimony of my gratitude for your valuable sermon on —. I now, though with the utmost reluctance, sit down to give you a proof of my honesty, on account of your sermon on, ‘Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind.’ Though I have neither the wisdom to be, nor the folly to think myself infallible, yet I hope I have a little of the kindness of a friend; and not any thing but gratitude to God, good will to man, and the satisfaction of my own conscience, could have engaged me in this unpleasant task. What you advanced, is contrary not only to my own experience, but to the experience of persons of every denomination I have conversed with: and though I make neither the experience of my acquaintance, nor that of my own, the common standard of all, you will excuse my freedom, I trust, when I honestly tell you, that the metaphorical meaning which you give to the text, as well as to its connexion, is incorrect. It is the rock on which I struck, and through which I had nearly ruined my soul.—I would observe, however, that I have neither the inclination nor ability to contest the point with you; and I am too sensible of the evils that might result from such an attempt, whatever ability I might possess as a casuist, should each of us aim at victory, rather than truth and edification. Should you choose to pay me a visit, and condescend to converse with me on the subject in a friendly way, I shall esteem it a favour. Lest, however, you should decline that favour, I here give you an account of what God hath done for my soul, as a reason of the hope that is in me; and I must say, that I have endeavoured to do it with meekness and fear.

“What I was made at my baptism, I cannot tell; but ever since I can remember, my mind was alienated from the life of God, my will was opposed to the will of him that made me, and my affections were set upon things below. Although I was restrained, through the blessing of God and the care of my parents, from many scandalous sins;—though I said my prayers, and went regularly to Church,—though I loved learning and religious conversation,—though while a child,

as some of my neighbours can testify, I was the most able of any of my Schoolfellows to answer such catechitical questions as were proposed by our worthy old minister, and that too, before the congregation,—and though I was esteemed as a hopeful and well-disposed youth by all that knew me, yet I was an entire stranger to myself, and quite destitute of the knowledge and love of God. I had learnt to say, that by nature I was born in sin, and was a child of wrath; still I concluded that, in my baptism, I was made a child of grace. In short, I was so regardless of my soul, that I at length quite neglected prayer, even the form of words taught by my mother, till shame drove me to it again by means of my brother who was my bed-fellow.

“When about the age of 18 my mother advised me to go to the Lord’s Supper, with which advice I complied, and endeavoured to make myself as worthy as possible. This ordinance I believe I never omitted, except once, for the space of more than twenty years, during which time I made a conscience of keeping myself unspotted from the world. For many years I feared God for the same reason I feared the devil: yet all the time I abhorred the impiety of persons professing to know the Lord, while they in works denied him, and was ready to say to such, Stand thou by, for I am more holy than thee, concluding myself at the same time to be a tolerably good christian, because I beheld many others more wicked than myself. When about eight of these years had elapsed (1742), the Lord, in his abundant mercy, sent his Holy Spirit, which, though by a still small voice, was effectual in convincing me of sin. He had given me frequent warnings before: but it was only then, to allude to your beautiful simile, that I was sick indeed, and even raving. I was sound while insensible of my sickness—sick unto death, but not apprehensive of my danger. Till then, the physician’s skill only enflamed my disorder; or to explain myself more fully, I concluded I was sound, because I constantly attended on the means of grace.

“But I was now made deeply sensible of my danger. My mind being somewhat enlightened, I saw my darkness; and my conscience being awakened, I perceived the deformity of my whole soul, and the absolute necessity of a real change in my mind, will, and affections; for with all my former religion, when it was brought to the trial, I preferred earth to heaven, sensual to spiritual gratifications, and the friendship and favour of man to that which cometh from God. Thus was I captivated by the riches, honours and

pleasures of a delusive world, without once perceiving the value of the unsearchable riches of Christ. I had, previous to this, very little desire of that honour which cometh from above, and a very imperfect idea of the present and everlasting pleasures, which are the result of a well-grounded assurance of an interest in the favour and friendship of the Saviour. But he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, continued to shine into my heart, and shewed me, not only that I must be lost without him, but also persuaded and assured me that I might find all in him. At length I was prevailed upon, by the exceeding greatness of his power, cheerfully and gladly to forsake all for him. Then it was that I found him to be altogether lovely. My soul seemed as it were, to receive new powers and inclinations, and the Bible which, till then, was read like a task, appeared a new book. I was amazed that the public ordinances of God, replete with such strong and emphatic expressions, and adapted exactly to my case, had left my soul unimproved. From that time, to allude to your simile again, though I dare not yet say I am sound, I venture to date the joyful hour when the fever left me. And glory be to the Author of the change, it was not so dull a day as to be soon forgotten. Then I could say without hesitation, My Maker is my friend, my solace, and my joy. The joyful thought of being free from condemnation enabled me to bless the Author of the happiness of those whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered, and unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin. Language cannot express the felicity I then felt. The fear of death which had held my soul in bondage, was removed, and I had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which I deemed far better. Nay, I experienced what I never expected, that his ways were pleasant, his paths peace, and his service perfect freedom. As I found no need, so neither had I any inclination for what are called innocent pleasures, though more properly carnal joys. I was conscious that I was born for better things, and that God was alone the chief, the all-sufficient good, the fountain of all felicity, and that no one besides himself could fill the capacious desires of the soul. It appeared to me to be beneath the dignity of an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ, to stoop, or even to be delighted with any thing that had the least appearance of evil,—to do or encourage any thing that would not tend to promote the glory of God and the good of man. Thus was I brought to, and washed in

the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. The streams of that fountain still gladden my heart, and refresh my soul.

"Once changed, I neither wanted the wealth of the Indies, the pleasures of the world, nor the honour of man, being sensible of higher honour, of greater favour, and superior dignity. I was transported at the amazing condescension of the Most High, for raising and restoring a rebel and a slave to his favour. I cannot but reflect with the deepest self-abasement, how far every thing had been out of order in my soul. My mind had been enslaved with fleshly pleasures, blinded with false notions of good and evil, dead to all sense of the chief good, and deaf to the loudest calls and most pressing invitations of the gospel. Earth was above heaven, the beast domineered over the angel, the spirit stooped to the body, and passion had the mastery of reason, till God, by the power of the Holy Ghost, subjected the body to the soul, and the soul to himself. But observe, I was not *figuratively* renewed in the spirit of my mind. I felt in myself the workings of the Spirit of Christ, gradually producing such a mighty change, and so literally consistent with your text, as well as many others, that I hope I may at least be excused from taking such passages in a purely metaphorical light, without the implication of a renewal of nature; and also for speaking of that which I have experienced, especially as the meaning I affix to the text is so consistent with reason and Scripture, and your sense, to make the best of it, is so exceedingly dangerous. Before a change took place, I was carnal, but afterwards my obedience was the effect of love and filial fear. I was guided by a new rule, not by my own will, but by the word of God. Though ever conscious of my own unworthiness, it was my chief delight to walk worthy of God, and my only aim to promote his glory.—What may be the result of the present liberty, I know not, but I subscribe myself, Rev. Sir, dutifully,

Your's

R. C."

This argument drawn from internal sources, however satisfactory to Mr. Cawley's own mind, would fail to produce equal effects on the mind of a person who was a stranger to the work described. He was afterwards better skilled in controversy, and by resorting to another armoury for weapons, he was enabled to draw from thence such arguments as were adapted to the persons with whom he engaged in combat. To such as "know the love of Christ," the let-

ter will be read with interest; and not less so, that which follows, and which he entitles, "My Conversion continued."

"I was truly sensible that nothing but almighty power could preserve me, and was enabled earnestly to beg of God for divine assistance. I soon found the need of it, for in about a fortnight's time, when by myself in the fields, I had a violent assault. The enemy was permitted to take possession of my unguarded thoughts, and strongly to represent the pleasures of my darling sin to my luxurious imagination: and had not divine grace interfered, he had certainly overcome. The Lord enabled me to deliberate: 'Wilt thou presume to abuse my grace after such sacred communications, vows, and resolutions? Wilt thou return like the dog to his vomit, and the swine, which was washed, to its wallowing in the mire? Think of the impossibility, or at least of the difficulty of being renewed again, after having been once enlightened, if thou should'st fall away.' I further reflected, that my blessed Saviour was thus assaulted soon after his baptism, and tempted in a high degree, when in a solitary wilderness. Through that Saviour I was enabled to repel him, and say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' This conquest created in me such extatic feelings, that it seemed as if angels had come and ministered to me. I prostrated myself in gratitude before God, and fervently prayed to him for preventing and persevering grace; and he was graciously pleased to preserve me from such assaults again for upwards of one year and a half. I had grace then given, to induce me to seek every opportunity for private devotion; and when I first retired, I received a blessing to my soul, and received it not only with enflamed affections, but under a deep sense of my unworthiness. Yet all this while, I had but confused notions of Christ, and was not experimentally and feelingly sensible of what a great price he had paid to redeem me. During this season, I prayed twice or thrice a day, besides morning and evening, and filled up other vacancies with meditations and ejaculations.

"As I retired from company as much as possible, I began to feel my want of, and often wished for a spiritual companion. At length I heard that a member of Mr. Whitfield's Society was at Namptwich, and being informed of his character, I was strongly inclined to visit him, and concluded in my own mind so to do, having appointed the day. But other business prevented, and my father's affairs calling him that way, he himself went thither, and thus disappointed my wish. The person returned to London the next day. Though this scheme failed, the Lord, who knew my

design, did not leave me comfortless, but by a kind providence sent me on the same night, by the hand of my father, Bishop Beveridge's *Private Thoughts*. The book came from a person from whom I least expected any thing of the kind. It was a female, who either once saw me, or had heard I loved reading; but I think the former, when I had a short encounter with her about Mr. Whitfield's doctrines, which she either thought or heard were not orthodox, but which I endeavoured to defend. I gladly received the volume, and received it as from the Lord; and instantly retired, before I even opened it, into one of the out-buildings, to beg a blessing upon its perusal, praying that the Lord would enable me to discern between truth and error. My prayers were so earnest, that they produced both sweat and tears. I was in an agony to know the truth. On opening it, I found my prayers were answered, for till then I was not convinced of the sins of my duties, and consequently, not fully acquainted with myself. Every sentence produced a tear, secret ejaculations were made, thanksgivings were offered, and every article was an additional branch of my faith. I became more and more enlightened, confirmed, and comforted. I saw the imperfection of every duty, yet the abundant mercy of God in washing away the guilt of all my sins. It was my delight to be upon my knees in communion with him in prayer, pleading for the instruments of my conversion in particular, and for all orders and degrees of mankind.

"About this time, God was pleased to afflict me with a severe illness. But I desired death rather than life; and though the pains of the former were a terror to me, its sting was not. When friends came to see me, and wished my recovery, I thanked them for their kindness, without closing heartily in with their will, though without courage to tell them so. I was afraid almost of recovery, lest I should not have strength to persevere. I enjoyed a heaven upon earth, and sometimes, in my dreams, thought I was in the eternal state, joining the chorus of the skies with angels and redeemed saints. On one occasion, I felt sorry when I awoke, and found it but a dream.

"The Lord was pleased to restore me, and to shew me that the remainder of life was additional mercy, and ought to be spent to his glory. And though the devil was prevented from tempting me to actual sin, yet I found in my heart much remaining corruption, and sweet sleep was sometimes disturbed by dreams, in which the pleasures of sin were pre-

sented to my imagination. This was a great grief to me, and led me sometimes to doubt whether I were converted, though they were what I utterly abhorred. I prayed earnestly, and God answered, for I was sometimes awakened in the midst of them, when the malignant intruder appeared present. In about one year and quarter, I obtained gradual strength and conquest. Though sensible I am in a state of grace, I have enough to humble me, and convince me that I am in the field, and not out of danger."

Mr. Richard Cawley was probably one of the first who professed a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins; and his increasing light possibly led to the defection of the reading society from the vestry. This naturally placed him in the attitude of a defender and a head; and he appears acting on the defensive some time after its formation, in what he entitles, "An Answer to Mr. Lycet's arguments against Religious Societies," dated "August, 1745." He proceeds:

"Dear Friend,

"When I look upon myself as made, preserved, and governed by the Creator of the universe; when I consider my deplorable state by nature, the length of time that I was insensible of my condemned condition, my neglect of the one thing needful, my false hopes and groundless conclusions, the blindness of my mind as to the necessity of the new birth, and the destitute state in which I should have been had not the Lord opened my eyes; when I compare what I have with what I deserve, and that I have nothing but what I receive from God; and when I recollect that the fig-tree was cursed for not bearing fruit, and that the servant was condemned, not so much for wasting, as not improving his talent; when, I say, such reflections as these possess my mind, I cannot but blush at my backwardness and inadvertencies, and fear lest I should fall into condemnation for not improving the gifts with which I am entrusted, and for not suffering my light to shine before men, that they may see that I am not ashamed, as formerly I was, to profess myself a disciple of the blessed Jesus. Therefore it is, that I believe it to be my indispensable duty to use the talents which I may possess in vindication of his glory. You will excuse, I trust, my rustic style, which at most can only demonstrate, that I am neither rhetorician nor politician. My greatest knowledge is to know, that I know nothing as I ought, and that the knowledge after which I aspire is, savingly to know Christ Jesus. I am more conversant with

husbandry than divinity. But as I was present at the conference which you had with Mr. Thawley, at Acton, Sunday the 4th of August, and was nearly silent, I think it right to reveal my mind respecting such parts of the conversation as I can recollect, and hope you will put the most candid construction on what you may deem improper: and if there should be any thing worthy your approbation, I hope you will be humble enough to confess it. I heartily wish we all had more grace, knowledge, and humility.

“In the first place, when I reflect on your calling, I must confess you deserve the utmost commendation. You are engaged with the Shepherd of souls, in endeavouring to prevent schisms and causeless divisions in the Church, a work in which all true christians ought to engage. This you seem to suspect in reference to religious meetings, stating, as you did, ‘That the consequences may be bad.’ But this, it was replied, ‘Is only supposition.’ For my own part, I cannot help grieving to see how much religion is depressed, and how few there are that even retain the form of godliness. The great concern of life is but little regarded. It is evident to all, that evil communications corrupt good manners, and that every one converses on that in which he most delights. Here we cannot but lament to find the generality of those who call themselves christians, living in a neglect of the commands of Christ, and that too, among the most sober part of them. Their conduct is the very reverse of what it ought to be. The world, and the things of the world, seem to engage their supreme affections; and by their worldly, improper conversation, the Sabbath day not excepted, it is to be feared that their treasure is on earth. Though we live in a nation where the pure word of God is read and preached, there is reason to fear that the heathen will rise up in judgment against us. This inundation of impiety is, I conceive, owing to a want of examples of another kind, and also a want of a proper application of the word of God. I am persuaded that those who are the most vicious, are the most insensible of the effects of the word, and that nothing but saying, ‘Thou art the man,’ will produce any impression. It is almost impossible, that a minister of a very large flock, should be able to admonish every person privately. Therefore, I am bold to invert your supposition, and, on the contrary, inclined to suppose the consequences may be good, of persons associating for religious purposes. God is able to bring about great matters by small means; and I am not without hope, that, from such examples, and from the exhortations and encouragements

given, religion will be brought into greater respect, and those of us who are engaged may be the instruments of bringing our intimate friends to be more regardful of their better part. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that religious conversation will tend to stop, in some degree, the torrent of wickedness, and induce many who have their hearts set upon the things of the world, to place them on things above: and I cannot but think, the Sabbath evening may be spent as profitably, by a few of us stirring each other up to the practice of the precepts we may have heard, as in drinking or talking on worldly matters:

“I am not insensible, that dangers may arise from such associations; but I cannot see any evils so great arising out of them, as they are otherwise intended to prevent. If I see my neighbour drowning, it is certainly my duty to endeavour to rescue him from the water, though I may expose my own life to some danger by the act. The application is easy.—I would also observe, that civil society is improved and strengthened by contracting fresh intimacies, and by new correspondents; and may we not hope, that the same effects will follow in religion? In fact, instead of causing divisions, I think it is the likeliest way to create a closer union.

“As to your supposition, that persons by such means may become distracted, it appears altogether groundless; because the meetings are intended for the encouragement, and not the discouragement, of such persons as entertain a good hope through grace. With regard to others, they ought not to presume to enter into them; their case is dangerous; there are more lost through presumption than by despair. You will excuse my plainness; but if you maintain, that there is so much difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of the plainest truths of Scripture, and insist, as you appeared to do, that many of the texts are not properly translated, this, I am certain, is more likely to drive us to distraction than any measure we adopt. Alas! what will become of the generality of mankind, if such only can understand the Bible as are conversant with the original! I confess, that various constructions are, and may be put upon many passages of the Scripture, and that the simplest truths are controverted by some men; but I believe the most important things, connected with knowledge and practice, are so plain, that he that runs may read them, and that by prayer, meditation, and conversation, we may attain a complete knowledge of the word of God. If it be maintained, that we ought not to consult, or confer with one another concerning any thing contained in the

Scriptures, and that we cannot improve each other by so doing, but must still remain ignorant, which is equal to our maintaining the doctrine of the Church from which we have revolted, then I think it is great presumption for any individual to pretend to infallibility in any thing, when the argument must preponderate more against the one than the many. Scripture is the best interpreter of itself; and I deem it requisite that christians should freely communicate their views, and exhort each other while they have time.

“And now, Sir, allow me to ask you one or two questions. The first is, did you verily believe that it was the divine pleasure, that you should interrupt us? If you answer, ‘Yes,’ as I hope you can, I would ask secondly, whether you are as zealous and vigilant in suppressing those dissolute and disorderly meetings, which are so frequent in most parts, both in town and country? I trust, on enquiry, that I shall find it so; though such things are too often neglected, to the scandal of religion, and in contempt of our national laws. I am sorry that any person of knowledge and distinction should be so disingenuous to their Creator, as to encourage persevering sinners to take example of the thief upon the cross.—I heartily thank you for your cautions, and hope they will be exceedingly useful. Trusting you will pardon my neglect of answering you sooner, which has been occasioned by a want of time, I am, &c.

R. CAWLEY.”

In the commencement of the letter, Mr. Cawley is more devotional than argumentative, and displays the christian rather than the controversialist; but it is evidently with a view to enlighten and impress his opponent. It may be taken for granted, that, from the charge of “schism,” the persons who were accustomed to associate for religious purposes, had left the vestry prior to the date of the letter; and that though they met for religious purposes, yet their meetings had not assumed the proper tone and character of a Wesleyan class-meeting. They bore an immediate resemblance to the one which was established at Betley, near Namptwich, about the same period, in which the Scriptures were read, and read as much with a view to doctrine and practice, as the advancement of experimental religion, thus resolving themselves into meetings of discussion rather than experience. This character, it should seem, they continued in a great degree to retain, till Mr. Wesley visited Alpraham; and this may be one reason among others, for classing the members with those of the

Oxford Society. Nor is it at all surprising that this should be the case, though remotely connected with the Methodists. It was the plan upon which the members commenced their meetings;—established customs are not always willing to give place to those of a more modern date;—the old plan possessed attractions for gratification as well as profit;—the preachers, being few in number, could pay but partial attention to remote places;—and it appears to have been more the province of John Bennet, than the other preachers, to visit them, who was not remarkably distinguished for his attention to class-meetings. Their connexion, however, with Methodism, is indisputable. The very act of giving countenance to itinerant preachers, would be the signal, if not for their dismissal, for their departure from the vestry.

The young person, whose letters are supposed to have given rise to the Society, continued to retain her piety, and to preserve an occasional correspondence with Mr. Cawley. In a letter to her mother from Bath, whither the lady, with whom she now resided, had gone for the season, she observes, “I received your’s with equal surprise and pleasure,—surprise, because I really thought you had been called above. It has given me another opportunity of seeing my weakness, for if I had possessed true christian resignation, I should not have tormented myself with uncertainties. Why did I not deliver you up to Him, who will do all things well? I condemn myself, and yet weak nature will be heard. So distressing were my apprehensions, that I was nearly being confined to a sick-bed through them. I know you will be grieved with me: but if you would do any thing toward preserving an indifferent state of health, or to prevent an indifferent state from growing worse, you must be punctual in writing.—It affords me great pleasure to hear of your happiness. May the Most High continue it, and improve it, both in a temporal and a spiritual sense!—You inquire the reason of my removal to Bath? It is usual with my mistress, at this season, to be here, attended by her companion, her maid, her housekeeper, and a footman.—My health is much as usual, but I hope the change will be of service to me. If nature has at all designed a place peculiarly for pleasure, I should conclude this to be it. But though prospects are beautiful, the place, I assure you, does not take with me. Religion is at the lowest ebb, and vanity at its highest flow. There are three baths, each of which, I suppose, would hold a hundred people. The smoke is like the smoke of a furnace. When the water first boils, it is as hot as you can well bear

your hands in it. The effects upon me for the first two or three times, were a drowsiness and a prodigious contraction in the forehead and face. The water promotes appetite, and I hope will be of service to me."

To Mr. Cawley, she remarks, after expressing her gratitude for his friendship, and referring to his illness, "Lately, I have been much in the wilderness. My distress was at first so great, that I was scarcely able to say any thing but 'Good Lord, deliver me.' I cannot, however, refrain from relating what appears to me to be a remarkable circumstance. In the midst of my conflict, I dropped into a small meeting-house, where was a gospel minister. He prayed to the Lord for one in my distressed state. His text was the lusting of Israel for food—their murmurings against the Lord and against Moses—and the Lord's displeasure with them. The preacher dwelt on the sore distraction in the camp of Israel, and applied it to the believer, in whose bosom it was also frequently found, on losing sight of God. Whatever might be the cause, unbelief would be sure to stare him in the face, saying, 'Shall I die here? Or can the Lord find sustenance in the wilderness?' He seeks but the Lord is gone. The enemy enters like a flood, and there appears no one to deliver. There is nothing in the world but contempt and folly, and nothing in the closet but confusion, distress, and anguish of spirit. The poor soul cries out, 'Help, Lord, or I am undone.' Such was my case, but the Lord did not suffer me to remain long in it. His promises are precious to me. He is my strength."

The name of this young person was Ann Smith. She afterwards became the wife of Dr. Whitehead, who wrote the Life of Mr. Wesley. She was now in the capacity of servant, and from an expression or two in her letter to Mr. Cawley, was not altogether agreeably circumstanced, owing, probably, to a want of religion in the family. "I find," says she, "this gay, delusive world, a sad enemy to my peace. I cannot help crying much to the Lord for deliverance from it. It would afford me great pleasure, if, in His providence, He would provide me a place among His people: but this, and every thing else, I endeavour to leave with Him. He is more to my soul than words can express." Such a female as this, ought not to go down to the dust without a record; and this notice of her, is only intended as a finger to point the stranger to her *monument*, for while a METHODIST SOCIETY exists in Alpraham, it will be seen towering to heaven to her honour. Her letters, as will be seen elsewhere, gave the first

impulse, dug the foundation, and laid the first stone;—Mr. Cawley gave it a form, and carried forward the superstructure;—and Mr. Wesley and his preachers following hard after, put a finishing hand to the work, as well as adorned it with a superscription.

Till the visit of Mr. Wesley the Society was approximating, by slow stages, to an evangelical state; and much had been done towards a general reformation of manners, domestic order, and personal devotions. Among Mr. Cawley's papers was a form of confession, supplication, and intercession, worthy of the Oxford Society in its purest and most rigid state; penned for private use, but possibly for the private use of every member of the Society at Alpraham. Mr. Cawley was not a man of many words; and though often called on to take up his pen in defence of truth, yet he was a lover of peace. He was regular in his attendance on all the means of grace, and equally attentive in the discharge of social and public duties. There was not a servant entered his service, ignorant of the letters that compose the English Alphabet, but whom he himself taught to read. He was appointed leader over the first class that was formed at Alpraham; and in all things, was a pattern of good works. On one side of a half sheet of foolscap, was printed, evidently for the purpose of nailing, or hanging up in some conspicuous part of the house, the following particulars; "WE, and *our House* will serve the LORD. FOR GOD IS LOVE. THEREFORE *our Earnest Request is*, THAT *every one who comes here will conform to our few RULES.*

I. WE have no time given to throw away, but to improve for Eternity; therefore we can join in no Conversation that is unprofitable, but in that only which is good to the use of edifying, ministering grace to the Hearers. Therefore,

II. WE have nothing to say to the News of the Town, and of the Business of others: But we desire to hear of Things pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD.

III. NEITHER have we any thing to say to the Misconduct of Others; therefore, let not the fault of an absent person be mentioned, unless absolute Necessity require it, and then let it be with the greatest Tenderness, without dwelling upon it. May GOD preserve us from a censorious and criticising Spirit, so contrary to that of CHRIST.

IV. WE offer the right Hand of Fellowship to every one that cometh in the name of the LORD: But we receive not any to a doubtful Disputation: But whosoever loveth the LORD JESUS in Sincerity, the same is our BROTHER, and

SISTER, and MOTHER; for we cannot but remember that GOD is LOVE.

V. WE neither receive nor pay Visits on the LORD'S DAY, for we and our House desire particularly on that Day, to serve the LORD.

VI. WE do earnestly intreat every one to reprove us faithfully, whenever we deviate from any of these Rules, so shall we be as Guardian Angels to each other, and as a Holy mingled flame, ascend up before God." [Price One Penny.] Harvie, Print.

Both the spirit and phraseology of the above rules seem to bear the stamp of Mr. Wesley's mind; and if his, they might have found their way to Alpraham, through the medium of the preachers, before his own arrival. The families in which such rules were observed, must have resembled so many churches; and where they were suspended and not attended to, they must have been a standing rebuke to the inmates, as well as have afforded a christian stranger or acquaintance a suitable text and occasion for reproof, and instruction in righteousness.

The opposition which the Society sustained, more frequently arose from persons professing godliness than from the openly vicious. Mr. Cawley's situation in life shielded him from the violence of his inferiors, and his connexion with the Society was a protection to its members. His father too, Mr. Stephen Cawley, as appears from some family papers, was "High Constable;" and the general awe which civil authority inspires, would operate as an additional check upon such as might have it in their hearts to offer personal or other violence. To a person of some consequence, Mr. R. Cawley remarked, when preparing the way for an increase of religion:—

"It was observed by our young preacher, that the greatest enemy to our Christianity, is the licentious lives of our intimates and correspondents. It is my opinion, on the other hand, that there cannot be a greater motive to duty than examples of piety and virtue. We may fairly infer from what we see among those around us, that example is more powerful than argument. There are many belonging to our congregations, who, in addition to occasional attendance, are partakers of those things, which through divine mercy, may make them happy, but who are ashamed of their profession, and are so negligent of their duty as to lead lives worse than those of turks or infidels, and have nothing left them, except their voice and shape, to distinguish them from the brute

creation. Several conjectures may be formed respecting this deplorable case; but, to me, no one appears so probable as this, viz. their being afraid of being accounted singular, which exposes them to bad company, and a forgetfulness and utter disregard of God.

“With all submission, therefore, to your judgment, I think there can be no better method of encouragement to the discharge of duty, than the promotion of Religious Societies. These are of such a nature as to convince the world, not only that the members are not ashamed of their profession, but are really in earnest to be saved, and may lead, through divine assistance, to the conversion of the profane. I am persuaded that a Society of this nature will meet with but poor encouragement, since vice hath so many advocates and virtue so few friends; and that it will meet with the railleries and insults of the impious. But then, all their insolence will add to its lustre, and will make it appear in the eyes of considerate persons the more splendid. And as it is every person’s duty to promote the good of Society and the honour of his Creator, so it is our duty. We cannot be engaged in any thing of equal importance, or in any thing that may be of more general benefit to the parish.

“As you are not altogether a stranger to such an undertaking, I deem it proper to address you, as the first and only person of importance. I doubt not of your fidelity, and I shall be obliged by your advice, and for your impartial opinion in an affair of such moment. It hath been the subject of much thought with me, for a considerable time, though I have not as yet revealed it to any one. If you approve of it, my best and most earnest endeavours shall not be wanting in its promotion. I believe some of my intimate friends will be glad to subscribe to it.”

From the employment of the expressions “*subscribe to it*,” it should seem as though he had been contemplating a nearer approach to class-meeting, and that it was not a bare subscription of *name* to the Society, but a subscription of *pence* to the work. He expresses also the probability of receiving *raillery* and *insult*, a species of treatment to which they would be more exposed in their closer union with the Methodists, than when connected with the Establishment; and also of the *conversion* of the profane,—terms that connect better with a Methodist class-meeting than a Reading Society.

Mr. Cawley, like all other good men, was seldom long without occasions for the exercise of his zeal, fidelity, and patience; and it is of some importance to shew how far he

proceeded, as the representative of a Society so much resembling the one of which Mr. Wesley had previously been a member, and how far he surpassed many of more exalted privileges. His earnest solicitude for the welfare of those around him, entered into every relation and situation in life. In what he calls, "Advice to a Sister," dated "Michaelmas Day, 1747," there are to be found several important considerations, which may prove useful to others.

"SISTER—You were lately blaming my mother for her imprudence in not reasoning with you in a proper manner, as to the connexion you have formed. I confess, I agree with you; but if reason be not obliterated in yourself by passion and prejudice, the following considerations may, through the divine blessing, be of service to you. I am aware that what I am going to advise is certain to expose me to the odium of some, and the ridicule of others, if not the resentment of yourself and others of the family. But, Sister, I am more careful of your good than your favour, and more fearful of your danger than of your displeasure. Therefore it is, that I shall study to write as I think, and commit the event to God. Should you act improperly, it will be some alleviation to the trouble of my mind, to reflect that I endeavoured to prevent your ruin, and chalk you out the road to felicity. —I dare not take upon me to asperse the bitterest of my enemies with falsities, much more J. F. whom I once more declare, that I could greatly respect, if he were renewed in the spirit of his mind. Nor do I disapprove of him as some do, for the faults of his brothers. But, to say nothing of him myself, he is, if the reports of others be to be believed, a follower of the multitude: and to be plain, I have great reason to fear, that you yourself have only heard or read, but never experienced the great work; and consequently, though you may have the use of reason, yet your senses may not be exercised to discern what is truly good or evil. Persons in a natural state discern not the things of the Spirit. With respect to *Yourself*.

"1. Consider whether it will be more agreeable to make choice of a person, whose absence will always give you uneasiness, not only from the painful apprehensions that he is wasting his money, but from his being exposed to all the dangers resulting therefrom, as well as the hardships consequent upon yourself: or one who may give you continual joy, whether present or absent, from a conviction that he is improving his time and his talents—that he eats and drinks

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to support nature—that he studies to please you—and that even the want of his conversation would be irksome.

“ 2. Whether you stay at home or go abroad, would you choose a person whose conversation was profitable and edifying, who would open to you the windows of his heart, and would gently admonish and warn you of any inconvenience and danger; or one who was vain, empty, and unprofitable, who mixed his words with oaths and curses, and who would acquaint you only with those affairs that could bear to be named?

“ 3. If there be a God that governs the earth, if there be a future state of rewards and punishments, and if all are the children of wrath, and exposed to eternal misery, till they are born again, I ask, is it not the highest wisdom to secure the one thing needful, and to consult, not barely how to please ourselves, but how to please that God who is able to save us from the wrath to come?

“ With respect to *God*:

“ 4. Whether is it more agreeable to His will that we please Him, and promote His interest in the earth, or that we gratify our worst enemy? Whether is it more proper, that we should be united to a true child of God, or a practical child of the devil? Would not the one endeavour to lead you, and all with whom he conversed, to the realms of light? And would there not be a danger of the other making both you and your's tenfold more the children of hell, by thoroughly furnishing you to every evil word and work? If you believe these things, would not you rather choose a person that would be a help than a hindrance to you in the great work of salvation—one that would be constantly endeavouring to serve God himself, and never better pleased than when all around him were doing the same—one that would carefully train up his children in the fear of the Lord, and convert his house into a little church—one that would not try to divert you with idle tales and profane songs, but who would indulge in useful discourse, reading, and in the songs of heaven.

“ With respect to *Others*.

“ 5. You are a professing christian, and like too many of us, have the name, though but little of the power of religion. Will it be any honour to God, for his enemies to have it in their power to say, ‘Your religion can stoop to impiety, or religion is but a name?’ Are you so bold as to risk your own happiness, to make another, as you may suppose, so? This is presumptuous. Are you willing it should be said of you, as, I think, you said, of M. S—m—, ‘You care for nothing but a for-

tune?" Alas! Can wealth give happiness? or money buy contentment? I believe her happiness in this world, ended with her marriage, and her ambition ended by an unexpected death. If there is much holiness, there will be much happiness; otherwise, marriage will be the beginning of misery. Alas!

'Gems, crowns, and captors, are but empty toys
To souls created for eternal joys.'

"With respect to your *Children*.

"6. If these should be brought up in the knowledge and love of God, they will be the comfort of your future years, and you will be enabled to reflect with joy, that you have been the instrument of training them up as heirs of an incorruptible crown. On the other hand, will it not be a melancholy thought, to reflect, at the close of your days, that you have been promoting the designs of Satan, by bringing up children to be a constant torment to you through life, and then to be plunged into everlasting perdition?

"These are some of the considerations, which I believe to be of the utmost importance, and which are not only calculated to silence all other objections, but likely to promote present and future happiness. I have long thought of taking this freedom with you, but remained silent, from a fear that your engagement was too strong to be broken. Taking it for granted, as you complained of my mother not reasoning with you, that you are willing to hear reasons, I have declared my whole mind. I would neither advise you to do, nor dissuade you from any thing, but for your happiness. I have delivered my soul, whatever may be the result; and shall not fail to intercede with Him for you, who has the hearts of all in his own hands, that he may give you wisdom to choose and grace to secure the better part,—that he may bless you with love and gratitude to himself—that he may never permit his temporal mercies to be the means or inducements to your misery, by drawing you into a noisome maze—and that you may endeavour to devote yourself to his glory. Let the beauties and ornaments after which you seek, be those of a meek and quiet spirit. Seek for one who is possessed of an inheritance in heaven—one who is enriched with the unsearchable riches of Christ. May the Spirit of truth apply these words to your heart, 'Better is a little, with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith!' I can only reason with, and pray for you. I have placed before you life and death; O, that you may choose life, that you and your seed after you, may live for ever!"

He did not confine his efforts for usefulness to the members of his own family, but extended them to those who were "*without*." To an acquaintance, he writes,

"DEAR FRIEND—Excuse my boldness; but I was lately in your company, when I trembled to hear your irreverence, in the use you made of the name of Almighty God, though for want of courage and opportunity I suffered you to pass unreprieved. I consider myself unworthy to take His venerable name into my mouth, when upon my knees; but you, contrary to the laws both of God and man, can employ the most horrid oaths and execrations, and can call your Creator to witness the most trifling things, even absurdities, not omitting to make a jest of damning your fellow creatures to all eternity, and that too, in such a way, that if your prayers were answered, I fear there would scarcely be a person in the world saved. Indeed the commonness of the thing seems to extinguish the fear which should attend it, and both clergy and laity are indifferent to it. Some will even excuse it, by saying they cannot help it; but on the very same ground a thief might plead for pardon, because he could not help stealing. Let me tell you, that sincere and hearty repentance is necessary, and that without it, the blood of Christ will be unavailable to you. Be persuaded to reflect on your conduct; love and duty oblige me to use this freedom. You would account the man base, who should see your body and your goods in danger of being destroyed, and should not endeavour to prevent it. Neither can I think of any of my acquaintance being doomed to eternal flames, into which you must be plunged without a reformation, without warning them. With tears I will continue to intercede for you. O reject not this call, nor despise the instructions of the unworthiest of God's servants." &c.

This reproof was followed by an anonymous letter, to which Mr. Cawley, suspecting the proper person, replied. He was charged by the writer, with insulting his neighbour, and defaming his character. Mr. C. on the other hand, took guilt to himself for not having courage to administer public reproof; and stated that he was so tender of character, that he had even hazarded his own respectability, by frequently vindicating the cause of the insulted. Then turning upon his opponent, whom he knew to be exempt from gross vices, he remarked, "I fear that you yourself are in a more dangerous state than the person you defend, having the form but not the power of godliness—placing religion in a mere round of duties, attending the ordinances of the church, and in

giving alms to the poor. But men may do all this, and much more, and yet be lost. Without the satisfaction of Christ, duties cannot save us. We may waste the body to a skeleton, by fasting, and drown ourselves in penitential tears, and yet may as soon perish by repentance as by profaneness. Though prayer and obedience cannot save us, yet the neglect thereof will condemn us."

The person with whom Mr. Cawley had the most powerful contest, and for whose salvation he made a noble struggle, was Richard Davenport, Esq. of Calveley Hall.* He had engaged the Esquire, as appears from a "Letter of Re-proof," as early as "Jan. 5, 1746;" but the grand effort was made a short time prior to Mr. Wesley's visit to Alpraham. It is to this person that Mr. Wesley refers, though he makes no mention of the name, when he says, "A gentleman who had several years before heard me preach at Bath, sending to invite me to dinner, I had three or four hours' serious conversation with him. O who maketh me to differ? Every objection he made to the christian system has passed through my mind also: but God did not suffer them to rest there, or to remove me from the hope of the gospel." This affords a view of the principles of the person with whom he had to contend. As the letter was never published, and contains some useful remarks, as well as affords a glance at some of the characters which figured at the time, it is desirable to preserve a few extracts. It is dated, "Aug. 3, 1749."

"Sir,

"When I had the honour to dine with you, we had some discourse on the subject of religion. This was partly occasioned by my making so free as to oppose some of your propositions. I confess I know not how to acquit myself of the charge of arrogance, in any other way, especially as our Reverend Minister was present, than that of an appeal to the Searcher of hearts, who knows that I only have a single eye to his glory, and the good of my neighbour. The consideration of my inability, the want of ardent affection to my fellow creatures, and a consciousness of many infirmities, often betray me into a cowardly humility, and a sinful silence. These were the occasions of a reluctant free-

* E. D. Davenport, Esq. M. P. for Shaftsbury, eldest son of — Davenport, Esq. of Capesthorn, M. P. for Cheshire, is the great grandson of Richard Davenport, Esq. and resides at Calveley Hall. This gentleman, with as much benevolence as christian liberality, has his name entered in the Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday Schools of Bunbury and Alpraham, for 1827, as a Subscriber of two guineas. To this may be added the name of Admiral Telemache, as a Subscriber of five pounds; and the Rev. J. Egerton, Rector of Bunbury, as a Subscriber of one guinea.

dom; but the candid answers you gave, and the impartial manner in which you declared your sentiments, embolden me to testify my affection for you, by sending some of my own sentiments on the particulars then noticed; and I purpose treating you with the love, plainness, and simplicity of a christian; neither attempting panegyric on the one hand; nor satire on the other. It is a pleasure to have to observe, that you are endowed with many desirable qualities, as honour, justice, temperance, beneficence, liberality, compassion, impartiality, ingenuity, &c. together with a commendable zeal for the public good, wisdom by which that zeal has been directed, and an ample fortune, which cannot but attract the respect and veneration of your country. I have also heard high encomiums passed upon you for your knowledge in divinity, and am well assured that you have read excellent authors. With this before me, I have not, I assure you, the vanity to suppose that I can add to your information, though I certainly have the honesty to exhort you to make a close application. Pardon me, therefore, dear Sir, if I tell you that the one thing needful is still the one thing wanting.

“You will recollect, that I made some reply to what you said; but I expected Mr. Low to have said something more. The reasons why I did not enlarge were, first, a fear of lessening your esteem, and secondly, a want of presence of mind.

“Some of your expressions to Mr. Burrough were to this effect: ‘I would have young persons to take youthful liberties—not to be too grave—but still to be careful not to injure their constitutions.’ This I recommended, from what I deemed a nobler motive, viz. the fear, not only of hurting the body, but of ruining the soul. ‘It is time enough,’ you replied, ‘to think of the soul thirty or forty years hence, or after persons have entered the marriage state.’ I reminded you, that young people are exhorted to remember their Creator; and intimated, as an argument against delay, that there are many who neither attain the state proposed, nor yet the age mentioned. Your answer was, if I understood you correctly, ‘That the Supreme Being was so merciful, that he would never exclude any from bliss, who cried to him on the verge of life.’ I observed that I dared not to presume to set bounds to the infinite mercy of God, for I knew that it was greater than the heavens, otherwise monsters like myself had been past hope; but I insisted at the same time, of the necessity of our being guided by His

counsels, in order to be admitted into His glory; and endeavoured to expose the vanity of false hopes, to which, if I mistake not, you partly agreed, by stating it to be 'The safest way.'

"In reply to your remark to Mr. Burroughs, on 'The sweetness of sin,' I enlarged on the dreadful reckoning to be made for it at the last day. I am ready to conclude, however, with many more that heard you, that a person of your knowledge and ingenuity, could not be guilty of such gross mistakes in the articles of our holy religion, and that, consequently, you were either in jest, or only wished to know whether or not we were better informed. But still notwithstanding my wish to come to that conclusion, I believe *first*, That a person may acquire a large stock of head knowledge, may have a form of creeds, a mantle of ceremonies, a great part of the Bible by rote, and may be almost as orthodox as the devil, and yet be devoid of the power of godliness, and without the image of Christ: I believe, *secondly*, That it is frequently otherwise, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither indeed can he, because they are spiritually discerned: and therefore, fearing you might be in earnest, as one of these must be your case, I am resolved to treat you with impartiality. It is the love of Christ that constrains me to hazard your favour, in hope that I may prevent your danger. It is not your gold, but your good, that I want—not your silver, but your salvation."

He then proceeds to establish the doctrine of human depravity, to define the nature and enforce the necessity of repentance, by appeals to matter of fact and appropriate texts of Scripture; concluding his argument with, "To me, there appears nothing more plain than this—That either the nature of heaven must be altered, or the state of man must be changed: if otherwise, there must be one heaven for the drunkard, another for the sportsman, a third for the covetous, and a fourth for the extravagant; or, if such were admitted into the heaven of God, they would resemble the land-bird in water, and fishes in air.

"What you stated on the mercy of God, is correct to a certain extent. He has given the strongest proofs of it, in the most pathetic language. He declares that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezek. 33. 11. chap. 18, 23, 32; and therefore would have all men washed from their filthiness, that they may be saved. From the Scriptural description which I have given of repentance,

I infer that mercy is boundless only to such as fear and endeavour to serve and please God. But if I understood you, and you were really in earnest, this view of the subject is inconsistent with your apprehensions of it, which you endeavour to strengthen by the case of the thief upon the cross. Still, you cannot but acknowledge, that if I valued life, it would be the utmost folly in me to embark in a ship, certain of a wreck, in hope that I might be saved by a broken plank. The promises of God must be our refuge; our hope must be in his word: but these promises are for his children, which he describes, Psal. 1, 1, 2; 24; 34; 119, 1, 2. Matt. 5, from 3d to 12th; John 13, 17; James 1, 22, &c.

“As to what you advanced concerning the sweetness of sin, I know to be true; but it is sweet only when we are at enmity with God. Allow me, however, to ask a few questions. Is not sin diametrically opposed to the nature and love of God, and the good of man? Did it not turn angels into devils, Adam out of paradise, drown the old world, and reduce the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes? Would not his majesty suspect your loyalty, if he were to hear you speak of the pleasures of rebellion? And would not you yourself suspect your lady's fidelity, if you were to hear her talk of the pleasures of incontinency? Did not you, when you went last to London, entrust your husbandry, particularly the sowing of barley, to your coachman? a duty which, I believe, he faithfully and seasonably attended to. But suppose drinking, indolence, or any other vice or motive, to have induced him to neglect it; suppose I had gone as a friend to him, and to you, and had admonished him, if he valued either your favour or your service, to be faithful to his trust; and suppose him again to have returned for reply, ‘That you were so exceedingly good-natured a gentleman, that he was afraid of no evil consequences;’ and so neglected your business till your return. What, I ask, would be the result? I persuade myself, that notwithstanding all your good nature, he would forfeit both your respect and your service, especially when you heard of my kind admonition, and his disingenuous reply to it. Is not this a distant resemblance to the case between God and ourselves? Is not repentance the gift of God, and is not the time appointed for it by infinite wisdom, Now? If so, procrastination, in so dangerous a case, is the utmost folly, as well as the vilest disingenuity. If bodily disorders are soonest cured, when taken in time, why may it not be the same in spiritual things?

“As you are a gentleman of engaging qualifications, you cannot be insensible how much your example might influence your dependants. Being blessed with an ample fortune, and with unprejudiced neighbours, you might contribute considerably to their spiritual welfare. You might, if you were as zealous for our eternal as for our temporal interest, become the guardian of the defenceless, and be entitled to the encouraging promise in Dan. 12, 3. But I am heartily concerned that not only your servants, but some of your neighbours, seem to think it creditable to imitate some of your vices. Some others of your real friends—though I am not willing to credit evil reports, are concerned, from a belief that your last London journey has contributed, in many respects, to your disadvantage. But still, though backward to receive such things from others, I am not a little confirmed in those reports, from what I was sorry to hear from your own mouth. I am certain that this address might have been given by abler and more worthy instruments; but as the work is yet undone, you will excuse, I am sure, what is prompted by love, as well as extorted by a fear of being accessary to your ruin, in not endeavouring to prevent it. I hope to escape the charge of a rash judge, or a rigid censor; of which you will acquit me, if you will read Levit. 19, 17, compared with Gal. 6, 1; Heb. 3, 13; Matt. 18, 15, &c. I accuse you of no particular improprieties; this I leave with your own conscience.

“Now, Sir, if this be the case, let me press upon you, in the name of the Most High, for the sake of the love of Christ, the salvation of your own soul, as well as the salvation of others, to consider your ways, and turn to the Lord, that your happiness may not terminate with the present life. You are now past the meridian of life, and you may be summoned hence sooner than you are aware. I would fain meet you in heaven; delay no longer; get oil into your lamp; refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven; be not deceived; consider Psal. 50, 22. Time is swifter than a post; life is but a span—a bubble—a vapour. The night cometh, when no man can work. Hath not conscience often told you, that you were on the verge of destruction? It was the voice of God; warning you to flee from the wrath to come. Now is the day of salvation. How can you escape, if you neglect it? Read 2 Thess. 1, 7, 8, 9. Compare it with Matt. 25, from the 31, to the end; and be honest enough with your soul to make the application. Try your hopes by the Scriptures, lest you should be like the foolish builder in the gospel.

"I have now delivered my sentiments and my soul, and have aimed, not at your commendation but your conversion, not at your thanks but to engage your thoughts. Though I have endeavoured to point out the texts suitable to your case, and to write as I could, though not as I would, I confess I have not so little of man in me as to be free from error, nor so much of the fool as to think it; yet I know, that the excellency of the power is of God, and hence it is, that I am not without hope of having to rejoice in your conversion, the glory of which shall be attributed to Him, to whom all glory is due. I have been more copious than I at first intended, and fear I have trespassed upon your patience; but as it is the longest, so I wish it may be the most useful letter ever written by

Your faithful friend,

RICHARD CAWLEY.

"P.S. I am so tender of your reputation, and so sensible of the painful effects which might result from my divulging this freedom, that I have disclosed it to none but God, yourself, and a friend in whose judgment I could confide, and for whose fidelity I dare answer: and to cut off suspicion, I send the letter by your worthy brother, who is ignorant of its contents, accompanied with my remarks on Mr. Law's book, which I am informed you are desirous to see. I cannot but say, that I have long wished for this opportunity, and was on former occasions pressed to it by some of your dependants, who would rejoice exceedingly to see you become A NEW CREATURE. I trust it will be received with the humility of a gentleman, and read with the candour of a christian."

The writings of Mr. Law, which had been read and circulated in the neighbourhood, appear to have occasioned a good deal of controversy, and to have unsettled the minds of some of the brotherhood; and what was worse, some of them indulged in amusements which wounded the spirit of Mr. Cawley. These things, amidst his constant efforts to spread the light and truth, occasioned him to mourn in secret. Turning from his own personal feelings and exertions, some opinion may be formed of the general state of the Society in Alpraham, from a letter written to him about ten months prior to the above.

“ London, Oct. 3, 1748.

“ DEAR FRIEND,

“ I received a letter from you on the 26th of August, dated April 29th, through which I find you do not forget me. This gave me no small comfort, as I was uneasy on account of your seeming strangeness. But I dare not say, ‘ Stand by thyself;’ if I did, shame might cover my face, and press down my Laodicean spirit.

“ Your observations on Mr. Law’s writings (as to the spirit and life which run through them) are, I think, very just,—I mean as it regards the controverted points which you mention. Mine is but a poor pen to flee to for advice. But if we consider simply the word of God, much may be said in Mr. Law’s favour. On reflecting on the nature of our fall, from an heavenly to an earthly mind, it will appear necessary for every person possessed of an estate, to stand on tip toe, lest the weight of his earthly mind should plunge him into the middle of it, and he should thus be lost in the common wreck of nature. He that spake as never man spake, knew how hard it is for those that have riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven. He knew well what is in man, and no doubt uttered the awakening words to bring to our recollection what he had spoken by the mouth of one of his prophets long before, Micah 2. 10. ‘ Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you even with a sore destruction.’ When we consider the practice of the primitive christians, Mr. Law’s assertions may be justified. However, I do not apprehend that Mr. Law, in any of his writings, exempts any person from being a christian, who has an estate, and does not literally sell it. But he is jealous lest they should make it their God, and so by trusting in vanity, vanity should be their everlasting recompence. I believe David shuddered when he found this evil. Do you not hear the sound of his voice? ‘ My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken me as thou art wont.’ I would here call to my own, and to your recollection, what has been said by one of our own poets.

‘ Give thy mind sea room; keep it wide of earth
That gulph, that rock of souls immortal.’

“ I am glad to hear our friend Davidson is recovered from his illness. I trust the Lord will make him an instrument of great good to many souls round about him. The ways of God are often mysterious to us in these cases—in the affliction of his children. But when we read that all things work for good to them that love God, we are constrained to

exclaim, 'How unsearchable are his judgments! and his ways past finding out!'

"I can truly say, I grieve with you, on account of those of your brethren, who have turned aside to lying vanities; especially to that in particular from which has proceeded so much mischief. It is thought, that going to see a Dance cost Jacob's daughter her honour; and it is evident it procured the beheading of John the Baptist. I pray God to shake them from their slumber, and make them in earnest for eternity!

"I am afraid the work of God here has been on the decline, owing to our lukewarmness and want of earnestness in prayer. We have not asked, and therefore have not received. O strange stupidity! I have often stood amazed at the long-suffering and mercy of God. He might well swear in his anger, that we shall not enter into his rest. But he has declared, that his mercy shall be set up for ever; his faithfulness will he establish in the very heavens. Continue, my dear friend, to pray for me, that I may not be as a withered branch in God's vineyard. Commend me also to the prayers of all the brethren. My respects to your father and mother, and all the family. I am your affectionate, though unworthy brother,

THOMAS HILDITCH.

"P. S. Mr. Whitfield is gone to Scotland, and is to return through Derbyshire; and possibly through Cheshire. Mr. Charles Wesley is in Ireland, and Mr. John is in the West of England. There is not any thing new published, except the second volume of Mr. Wesley's *Sermons*. I shall be glad to hear from you. Direct for me at Mr. Wagster's, Gravel Court, near the Salmon and Ball, upper end of Bunhill Row."

The familiarity with which the appellation "brethren" is employed, might be adduced in favour of the existence of a Society in Alplaham, up to the date of this epistle; and the reference to "new" publications, would lead to a confirmation of the opinion already formed, of its having been a Reading Society. The works, as it should seem from a reference to Mr. Wesley's *Sermons*, were of a *Religious* character; and as Mr. Hilditch wished to be remembered in "The prayers of all the brethren," it is highly probable, that, notwithstanding the laxity of a few, who might have turned aside, in order to foot it at the dance, the Society was becoming more and more a decidedly Religious Society, uniting to the desire of improving the mind by reading, the improvement of the

heart by prayer. Mr. Hilditch himself appears to have been a member, and Davidson, whom he expected would be "An instrument of great good to many souls," seems to have acted in a public capacity. From a review of the whole, this Society will appear, in the course of its progress, to have combined in it the principles and peculiarities of singularity, self-denial, union, individual improvement, prayer, and general usefulness; all of which were distinctly marked in the "Godly Club," so called, at Oxford. And although it had not, till some years after its existence, been favoured with a personal visit, from either Mr. Wesley or Mr. Whitfield, yet the members loved and affected to imitate these two good men, and embraced every opportunity in their letters and conversation to stimulate each other to greater exertion by a recollection of their zeal.

After Mr. Wesley had visited Alpraham, such were the effects produced, that Mr. Cawley had to write "An Appeal to the Church Wardens, and others of the inhabitants of the Parish of Bunbury," and to defend his conduct for having invited him to the place. He accosts them;

"My Friends,—for so I would fain call you, I am concerned to find, that any persons professing themselves members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, should consider themselves aggrieved at any thing done to promote the glory of God and the good of men; and no one could persuade me that you have not become apostates, were I not persuaded that you are entirely unacquainted with our designs and intentions in what we are doing, and also ignorant of the blessed effects of Mr. Wesley's preaching in different parts of England, as well as elsewhere. You may possibly consider him more fit for a prison than a pulpit; but in order, if possible, to make you better acquainted with the subject, I will inform you, in as plain a manner as I can, of my design in writing to him.

"When the spirit of God had opened my eyes, and turned me from darkness to light, from the power of sin and satan to himself, I could not but be heartily concerned to see that the generality of mankind were living as though there were neither God nor devil, running in the broad way that leads to destruction, while others were contenting themselves with only the form of godliness. There were a few exceptions. Therefore I introduced myself into the company of such persons as I had reason to believe were real christians, viz. such as had learnt to deny themselves of ungodliness and worldly lusts, and hoped to benefit by their advice and example, for

which I have great cause to praise God. Several of these persons, the most exemplary for piety, informed me, that Mr. Wesley had been instrumental in quickening them, and that, till they heard him, and others whom he got to assist him, they were dead in trespasses and in sins. Some of these persons were born and brought up in our neighbourhood, and were remarkably wicked in their younger years. They were much grieved to see their old companions led captive by the devil at his will, and wished that Mr. Wesley would visit these parts. Some of their relations seeing such a wonderful change, were desirous of the same. In consequence of this, several of them desired me to write for the favour of his labours. This I was the more inclined to, as I had read some of his writings, and was intimate with some of the Society. Being apprehensive, however, of objections and opposition from such as might know nothing of the intention of the thing, and were ready to believe all the malicious reports which satan is continually spreading to prevent the destruction of his kingdom, I deemed it proper to consult those whom I thought more proper to advise in such a case than myself. The result was,—That as many of our neighbours lived in the open violation of the laws of God, in swearing, sabbath breaking, drunkenness, lying, stealing, adultery, backbiting, and other notorious sins,—that as the Scriptures assured us that such as do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,—that as the common or regular preaching which we had, did not effect a reformation,—that as the impending judgments of God upon our cattle produced no serious effect,—that as both our temporal and eternal interests were at stake,—and that as there was only one way of escape, viz. by a speedy and hearty repentance, who could tell, but that God might bless the message of his servant, should he come among us, by turning many to righteousness? These considerations induced me to write a letter to Mr. Wesley, to favour us with a sermon when he came this way, and of whose coming I had little doubt, as I was assured that he was always ready to every good word and work. I was aware too, that he was a person against whom there could be no reasonable objection, being a man possessed of as much piety and learning as most men in England—a Fellow of Lincoln College—a member of the Established Church,—and one of the noblest defenders of her doctrines I ever read. The greatest objection I ever heard against him was, that of his being instant in season and out of season, and that of his preaching from house to house as well as in the

temple,—a charge, by the way, which was given to the first preachers of the gospel.

“When I wrote to Mr. Wesley, I received for answer, that he would be here on the 12th of October: but something happening to prevent his coming on that day, he sent another person to supply his place, that we might not be altogether disappointed. The person thus sent, preached in such an engaging manner, and with words so inviting, that I believe that most who heard him, were ready to praise God on his account. I must confess I never saw persons so affected before. This messenger informed us when we might expect Mr. Wesley. Pursuant to this, some of the parishioners had obtained permission of our minister for the use of the pulpit. I began to wonder, as several were inspired with good desires, that the prince of darkness did not muster his forces to prevent the weakening and subversion of his kingdom. My wonder ceased, for I was soon informed that some of the gentlemen of the parish had sent for our Reverend Minister, and persuaded him not to suffer Mr. Wesley to preach in the church; but that he might not be prevented from preaching in our house. Accordingly, he came, and as several desired it, ordered another person to come the ensuing week. I inquired in the interim, of several of the neighbours, whether they were of opinion that any good had been done, or was likely to result from it? They answered, that they saw a wonderful alteration in their workmen, and others, and begged that the favour might be continued. They further observed, that they were persuaded that it would be conducive to the glory of God, in the salvation of many souls, who, otherwise, without a miracle of grace, would be eternally lost, seeing that many came who never went to church, and others, who had the name but not the mind of Christ, were also brought under the word, and would be enabled to perceive, that the christian name is as ineffectual to salvation as the naming a ship the Safeguard or the Good-speed will preserve her from foundering. These are the plain reasons in favour of our late proceedings; and if you are concerned for the divine glory, the good of your fellow creatures, or for your own reputation, I would have you to deliberate on what you are doing, in offering to oppose these men, lest you should be found fighting against God. I trust you can say, in reference to what you have already done, that you acted from these views; that you were guided by pure christian zeal, in endeavouring to prevent what you thought would have a tendency to eclipse the honour of our

own Minister, as in the case of Joshua, noticed in Numb. 11, 28, and John, noticed in Luke 9, 49. But when you have properly learned the answers which were given by Moses and Jesus, you will probably be otherwise minded. You will allow that the ministers, in either case, who furnished the reply, were infallible: and I am not afraid to affirm that even a greater and a better minister than our own, rejoiced that Christ was preached, though from more unworthy motives than those which you can charge either upon us or Mr. Wesley. Read Phil. 1. 15, 16, 17, 18.

“There is but one objection of any weight, which religious characters, who know the whole affair, make to it, viz. ‘That several of the Preachers have not had human ordination.’ To this I reply, 1. Laymen are permitted to read, &c. in most of the Cathedrals in England; and these may be considered as the exemplars of others. 2. I cannot find that the Scriptures make ordination an absolutely necessary act. 3. It has been refused to many, who were as well qualified with learning and piety, as some who have received it,—and refused for no other reason than that they were the friends or converts of Mr. Wesley. 4. As it is frequently granted to persons unqualified and wicked, I consider it as extremely partial, and such men to be imposed upon us as a judgment rather than a mercy—from whom, may the Lord deliver us! 5. As these men no more pretend to assume the kingly than the priestly office, neither administering the Sacraments nor preaching in any consecrated place, but simply act from disinterested motives, warning men to flee from the wrath to come, and entreating them to be reconciled to God, and that not only by their public exhortations, but by a holy life and conversation, thus endeavouring to do good unto all men, I make no more scruple in hearing them, from a persuasion that they are sent out by God, if not by man, than either you or others may have in applying to an old woman for a cure, instead of a licenced surgeon or a regular doctor of physic; and I am not without my fears, that those who cannot endure that an unordained man should employ his utmost endeavours to save souls from hell, have as slender pretensions to humanity, as they have to the love of God and their neighbour. If your shepherd were to sleep, and the wolf in consequence were to devour your flock, or if your sheep were to starve, would you not be ready to blame even an indifferent person, who had an opportunity to save them, but neglected to interpose? and of how much greater value is the soul of a man, than the life of a beast?

“Far be it from me to encourage divisions or separations, or to give offence to any one; and I hope, before this, you are better informed. Should you not, we judge, that as the salvation of one soul is of greater value than the whole world, and as there is a probability in favour of their being the instruments of great good, both here and elsewhere, we ought to obey God rather than man. You will perceive, that I have put the most candid constructions upon your motives, and have supposed you—though some are of a very different opinion, to be influenced in your proceedings by a zeal for the glory of God and the good of man, and hope that your consciences can witness to the fact. But that neither of us may be deceived, allow me to propose a few questions, as so many touchstones, by which to try the case: and let me entreat you to charge your consciences to give the same answer now, which they will not be afraid to do, when brought to the bar of that God, before whom we shall all shortly have to appear. And, 1. Did you ever endeavour to prevent a swearing, drinking, and unintelligible minister from preaching? 2. Are neither you nor any of your families guilty of these and other vices, and would you rather be miserable yourselves, and have them eternally miserable, than be called to repentance by one of these laymen? 3. If we are wrong, please to inform us in that which is better, but do not imagine you can do it by clubs and staves. Why did the members of the Bunbury congregation not send a more worthy or more honourable ambassador than they did? Gentlemen, did you really intend to please and glorify God, by sending such a character to reform us? If so, why did you first equip him for hell? O, consider the dreadful threatening denounced against those who do evil, that good may come. Remember, and tremble, for their damnation is just. We are willing to hear Scripture or Reason, but are unwilling to listen to a person devoid of both: nor dare we take such as a guide to heaven, lest he should lead us direct to destruction.

“Pardon me for again reminding you, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; appear before Him, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secret thing is hid; who searches the heart, views, and intentions; and who will finally pronounce, ‘Come, ye Blessed,’ or ‘Depart, ye Cursed.’ The one or other of these sentences must be ours; and that we may all be saved from our sins, united to Christ, and not be sur-

prized by the midnight cry, is the hearty desire and prayer of your real Friend!"

From the circumstantial manner in which Mr. Wesley's visit is detailed, together with that of the person who supplied his place, it would almost lead to the conclusion, that it is from thence that the date must be carried for the introduction of Methodism into Alpraham: and this would have been the decided conviction of the writer, had not other incidental notices and collateral proofs, authorized a contrary opinion. The visits, however, previously to this, must have been extremely few in number, unobtrusive in their manner, and partial in their influence. Nor is it at all likely, that any of Mr. Wesley's preachers or followers, would attract equal notice with himself. All that had preceded, might be deemed as only a few visits from the outposts of an army; but now we are to contemplate the grand entrance, preceded by a special meeting of the most devout of the inhabitants, and occasioned by a special invitation, with the prospect of a permanent residence. Till now, there had probably been no formal, no public acknowledgment of an union, though an avowed readiness to meet every effort to promote the salvation of their neighbours; and till now, there had been nothing like regular preaching; but Mr. Wesley, yielding to the importunities of those who countenanced him, sent a preacher the *next week*, and thus established a Methodist ministry in the place. Incursions on territory and on liberty are frequently made, and as frequently endured, when there is an impression on the mind, that they will either soon terminate, will never be extended, or are so insignificant as to leave not only the title good, but the major part unimpaired. But when the invaded perceive one encroachment after another, and at length a strong hand laid upon the whole, it is not to be wondered that they should make a vigorous effort to secure their privileges, and rid themselves of the evil. This appears to have been the case in the present instance; and hence, "*clubs and staves*" were resorted to, as the last argument of a hitherto apparently suffering, but now enraged multitude. Mr. Cawley speaks too, of Mr. Wesley and his Preachers having been useful to persons "*born and brought up in the neighbourhood,*" and of an *intimacy* with some of the members of "*Society,*" before the formal invitation was sent from Alpraham: and his defence of an unordained ministry, would have been somewhat gratuitous, as coupled with Mr. Wesley's visit, if he had not had a partial eye to the past as well

as the future. From an employment of the words, "*our designs*," and "*our proceedings*," it may be taken for granted, that the Society which had so long existed in the place, went with Mr. Cawley to the fullest extent of his exertions on the occasion.

By a little attention to dates, it should seem that two letters had been written to Mr. Wesley, and that it was only the reception of the latter which he acknowledges in his Journals. Mr. Wesley was at Leeds on the 9th of October. It was from thence probably, that he wrote, in answer to the first, stating that he would be at Alpraham on the 12th. He observes, however, that, according to a prior engagement, he had altered his route for Newcastle. The next letter was received on the 19th, at Davyhulme; and appears to have been written for his further encouragement, occasioned by the flattering reception with which he was likely to meet, from the "Minister of Acton," who, in the interim, from a personal application made to him, had complied with the wish of some friends, to lend the use of his pulpit.

Mr. Wesley's remarks on the religious character of the people of Alpraham, must only be understood as applying to professors in general; of whom, he observes, "I found we were not now among publicans and sinners, but among those who awhile ago supposed 'They needed no repentance.'" From these he makes another selection, and remarks, in the quotation to which repeated allusion has been made, that "Many of them had been long 'exercising themselves to Godliness,' in much the same manner as we did at Oxford; but they were now thoroughly willing to renounce their own, and accept 'The righteousness which is of God by faith.'" Though many of the latter might be members of the praying and reading Society, there is no just reason to suppose that Mr. Wesley included Messrs. Cawley, Hilditch, and Davidson among them; for these seem to have had correct views of christian doctrine, as well as genuine piety of heart.

There is some reason to believe, that the person who supplied Mr. Wesley's lack of service on the 12th, was no other than Mr. Edward Perrenot, whom he very likely sent from Leeds, as he himself was about to depart for Newcastle, and who returned again from Alpraham to give him the meeting at Bolton. Mr. Wesley knew his man; and a preacher of more than ordinary address, and powers of mind, was necessary for the occasion, in order to blunt the keen edge of disappointment. From Mr. Cawley's account of him, it only redoubles the regret which is naturally felt, in reflect-

ing on the circumstances which led to his disunion with the body.*

Mr. Hopper, who had spent a short time at Manchester, was not long before he perfected the work in Alpraham, which Mr. Wesley had advanced. "I rode through Cheshire," says he, "and joined a Society at Alpraham, and another at Pool. It was an humbling time among the opulent farmers: the murrain raging amongst their cattle. They buried them in the open fields. Their graves were a solemn scene. The hand of the Lord was on the land. I visited the suburbs of Chester. God begun a good work then, which has insreased and continued to this day."†

Thus has been beheld this interesting Society, in its rise, its progress, and its final and formal union with the Methodists. Abandoning the notion of a building, to which it has been compared, its members, in their history, will afford no distant resemblance to a little company of voyagers; at first, safely and comfortably harboured, so to speak, in the vestry,—next weighing anchor for the boundless ocean,—put, in a separation from the Establishment and by an abridgment of privilege, upon short allowance,—in occasional danger of springing a leak, and so foundering at sea, through the imprudence and improper conduct of some of the crew,—thwarted now and then by cross winds, blowing

* Dr. A. Clarke, in the course of a conversation with the writer, communicated the following characteristic anecdote of him. He remarked, that Mr. Wesley had long been desirous of hearing Mr. E. Perronet preach, and that Mr. P. aware of it, was as resolutely determined he should not, and therefore studied to avoid every occasion that would lead to it. Mr. Wesley was preaching in London one evening, and seeing Mr. P. in the Chapel, published, without asking his consent, that he would preach there the next morning at five o'clock. Mr. P. had too much respect for the congregation, to disturb their peace by a public remonstrance, and too much respect for Mr. Wesley entirely to resist his bidding. The night passed over—Mr. P. ascended the pulpit, under an impression that Mr. W. would be secreted in some corner of the Chapel, if he did not shew himself publicly—and after singing and prayer, informed the congregation, That he appeared before them contrary to his own wish,—that he had never been once asked, much less his consent gained to preach—that he had done violence to his feelings to shew his respect to the publisher—and that now, that he had been compelled to occupy the place in which he stood, weak and inadequate as he was for the work assigned him, he would pledge himself to furnish them with the best sermon that ever had been delivered. Opening the Bible, he then proceeded, with the utmost gravity, and with great feeling, to read our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, which he concluded without a single word of his own, by way of note or comment. He closed the service with singing and prayer.—No imitator has been able to produce equal effect, and perhaps for this reason—the case is one, which, under similar circumstances, ought not to be imitated.

Even in his more serious moods, after wit had usurped a dominion over him, he indulged in singularity. A striking instance of this has been communicated by Mr. Pipe. Not long before Mr. Perronet's death, Mr. Pipe was walking in a public resort in Canterbury. Mr. Perronet was at a distance before him, and was walking, with considerable ministerial dignity, and measured steps, towards him. When he came up to him, he made a sudden pause, and putting his hand to his hat, accosted him with, "Your humble servant, Mr. Pipe;" then stretching out his arm, and pointing his fore finger in a direction so as to adapt the action to the language, he said, "Look inward—look onward—look upward;" and again putting his hand to his hat, added, "I wish you good morning Mr. Pipe;" and passed on, with equal majesty and gravity, without another sentence. Mr. Pipe was young in the ministry,—it seemed as though one from the world of spirits had passed him, and told him to look into his heart, to contemplate the reward at the end of his work and of his race, and to turn his view upward to that God who was to support him through the whole.

† Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 91

from opposite quarters,—favoured at intervals with a supply of the genuine bread and water of life, by a preacher, who, like a passing vessel, was voyaging to another port,—invitations, like so many signals of distress, hoisted for the purpose of attracting attention and obtaining efficient aid,—still steering towards Wesleyanism, as the only haven they were anxious to enter,—and at length, under convoy of the venerable Hopper, towed in safety to the place where they would be, and fixed under proper moorings. Much had been done by others; and what they had done, was consummated by Mr. Hopper.

CHAPTER IX.

Continuation of an account of the work at Alpraham—John Nelson—Preaching in the open air—Persecution—Application made to R. Davenport, Esq. to expel the Methodists from the place—The applicants discountenanced—Mr. Wesley's conversation with R. Davenport, Esq. and its probable effects—Places for social meetings—Biographical Notices of different members of the Sim family—Providential deliverance—Spread of the work to Pool, Rushton, Duddon, and other places—Notices of Messrs. Smith, Gardiner, and Bayley.

Mr. Hopper had scarcely left the place, when John Nelson made his appearance; who is stated, by the Rev. William Smith, in a memoir of Mr. Samuel Hitchen, to have "Taken Messrs. John, William, and Ralph Sim, of Alpraham, into the Methodist Society, in the Autumn of 1749."*

Such was the concourse of people that assembled to hear preaching, that Mr. Stephen Cawley's house was unequal to their accommodation; in consequence of which, John Nelson took his stand beneath a pear-tree, from whence he addressed his auditors with his usual energy. It was the first time that field-preaching had been resorted to in the neighbourhood; and from the novelty of the circumstance, together with repeated visits to the spot, the persons who officiated, obtained, for a considerable length of time afterwards, the appellation of "Pear-Tree Preachers." This apparent outrage of public order—field preaching, was deemed a seasonable occasion for public disturbance; and those who were disposed for riot, were ready to conclude, that they could shield their own lawless conduct from punishment and disgrace, from the supposed illegality of such proceedings.

To render disturbance more secure, a sum of money

* Meth. Mag. 1825, p. 722.

was collected, to the amount of twenty five shillings, for the purpose of purchasing liquor, in order to give to the most active part of the enraged populace; a case similar to that of Colne, and in which neither of the parties could boast of reason, since that monarch of the soul was obliged to be dethroned, before the passions, which ought to move in the capacity of subjects, could be brought into active operation. A person of the name of Thomas Loyd engaged to take the command, and as captain, to lead the seed of evil doers on to the attack. On approaching the scene of action, it was suggested to one of them, whose heart seemed to misgive him, that they had better apply to R. Davenport, Esq. of Calveley Hall, whose residence was only about half a mile distant, in order to obtain his suffrage, and, if possible, his approbation; of which they entertained no great doubt, from a knowledge of his principles. Thither they marched, with their champion at their head, who soon obtained an audience with the object of their pursuit, but who, in requesting permission to expel the Methodists from the parish, was accosted with, "No, Thomas,—by no means; lest they should be in the right, and we should be in the wrong. I would not have them persecuted for a hundred pounds, merely on the possibility of their being right." The captain returned a good deal dispirited; and on delivering his message, the multitude dispersed, without offering further molestation.

Notwithstanding Mr. Davenport's sentiments on the subject of religion, the reception which Loyd experienced, is just what might have been anticipated. Mr. D. had been so far influenced in Mr. Wesley's favour, from having heard him at Bath, as to solicit a personal interview with him; he was on such terms of intimacy with Mr. Cawley as to admit him to his table; and such were the previous drillings he had undergone, in consequence of Mr. Cawley's personal appeal, and Mr. Wesley's conversation during his visit, that he must have had too much light, and too many good feelings to sacrifice, to admit of his countenancing such hostile proceedings. The devotional part of the people, not to say the more rational, could scarcely have been considered worthy of censure, if they had professed to see the hand of providence in that kind of regular training which had been afforded, and which as gradually prepared Mr. D. for the part which he sustained, as if designed by the persons he favoured: and there is at least one, who blames them not, if they entertained an old fashioned notion, which has taken

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possession of some minds,—That the man who is attentive to the movements of providence, will never want a providence to observe.

Of Mr. Cawley's letter, it is unnecessary to add any thing more; but still, it may prove an indulgence, to furnish a few of the particulars connected with Mr. Wesley's interview, of which he says so little himself, and yet in that little, so much to awaken curiosity. The case, as far as it can now be collected, is this: Mr. Davenport sent a special invitation to Mr. Wesley, the Rev. — Lowe, minister of the parish, and Mr. Stephen Cawley, to visit him. His principal object was, to acquire a more accurate knowledge of the doctrine of the New Birth than he possessed, and which was so much the subject of conversation. As a mark of respect to Mr. Lowe, who was not only the minister of the parish, but senior to Mr. Wesley, the subject was proposed to him. He indulged in considerable prolixity, and laid great stress on baptism. Mr. Wesley next took up the subject, and for the purpose of rendering himself not only more intelligible to an unenlightened mind, but more useful, preferred describing the New Birth rather from its effects, than in its nature. He commenced with "the natural man," whom he pourtrayed in several characters, and especially the man of the world, entering into his pursuits, desires, &c. While dwelling on the desire of riches, Mr. D. either by way of bravado, or from the native frankness of his nature, threw open his arms, and exclaimed, that he would aim at nothing short of the world, if he could obtain it. This, to Mr. Wesley, was only an attestation of the truth of what he had advanced, and he had too much acuteness not to perceive the ground on which it placed him; and having had one part of the position which he had taken rendered perfectly secure, he proceeded to shew that the man who experienced the New Birth, had his affections drawn away from earth, and fixed on things above; that his pursuits, his desires, his hopes, his fears, his joys, were all changed: and before he had completed, what he terms in his Journal, his "Three or four hours of serious conversation," Mr. D. began to feel some of those qualms coming over him, which, —making proper allowance for subject and character, Felix experienced when Paul was in his presence. Mr. D. turning to Mr. Stephen Cawley, inquired whether he had experienced the change spoken of? when he candidly replied in the affirmative. "Well," returned Mr. D. "if I should ever experience any thing of the kind, you will

be the first to whom I shall make it known:" adding, "I can comprehend Mr. Wesley on the subject, but I cannot well understand Mr. Lowe."

The conversation deepened in seriousness as they proceeded, and Mr. D. asked Mr. Wesley, whether he would visit him on his death bed, if time were allowed, and he should send for him? To which a suitable reply was returned. On their leaving, Mr. D. was anxious to send Mr. Wesley and Mr. S. Cawley, to the house of the latter, in his carriage, to which neither of them would accede. He then presented Mr. W. with a piece of gold, the value of thirty-six shillings, which he at first declined to accept: but on being repeatedly pressed to take it, Mr. D. supporting his wish by arguments drawn from the cause and charities which he (Mr. W.) had to support, as well as the expences and uncertainty of seasonable supplies in travelling, he received the boon. Mr. D. became more regular and serious after this; and it was when these better feelings were in operation, to which he found it impossible to do violence, that an application for the expulsion of the Methodists was made. Had Mr. D. followed up these hallowed impressions, he might have been rendered extensively useful. So long, however, as they continued, the Methodists experienced their beneficial effects; and he was never known at any time, to offer them the slightest opposition.

John Nelson, in order to promote regularity, and acquaint each preacher with the residence, and number of the members, ruled a sheet of paper, inserted the names, and gave them to Mr. R. Cawley, whose name stood at the head of the list, as the leader. To the company, therefore, which Mr. Hopper had collected, John Nelson added the necessary appendage of a *Class-paper*, without which, Methodism in its present state, knows nothing of a *Society*. Mr. Hopper's remarks are sufficient to authorize a belief, that he had taken down the names of all who were willing to enter into church fellowship with the body; but the social *check-book*, which has ever been found of importance, might have been designedly omitted by him, for the purpose of giving the persons interested a little time to reflect upon the engagement into which they had entered.

The place of meeting, after the original Society had left the vestry, was the house of a person of the name of Evans, who sustained the two-fold office of village-school-master, and parish clerk; and it is not improbable, that it was owing to his sustaining the latter character, that the

Society first obtained an introduction to the vestry. The members met several years in his house, in the afternoon or evening of every sabbath, at the close of church hours; among whom, in addition to those already named, were Messrs. John, William, and Ralph Sim, of Alpraham, and George Craven, of Bunbury. Mr. Evans now removed to Middlewich, where his mother resided, and the class was removed to Mr. Cawley's, where preaching was established, and where it continued for the space of about twelve months, when it was transferred to the house of Mr. Sim.

The Sim family resided at Bunbury towards the beginning of the seventeenth century, and were highly respectable agriculturists. It appears from the parish register, that Mary, the eldest daughter of John and Mary Sim, was baptized, April 15th, 1705. Soon after this, the parish was cursed with a drunken pastor, who added to the neglect of the flock, a neglect of the records; and for a space of twenty-five years, an afflictive blank is visible, in which neither baptisms, marriages, nor burials are registered. Hence the impossibility of ascertaining the ages of the other children, destined to adorn the christian profession. From Bunbury, they removed to a farm at Ebnor Bank, near Malpas. It was here that William, one of the children, was so singularly preserved from drowning. He went with his brother Ralph to bathe, but on proceeding beyond his depth, he sunk to the bottom of the water. Ralph being unable to render any assistance, immediately left him, and ran home to inform the family. At the moment the boy disappeared, a dog which was lying with composure upon a grass plat in the front of the house, a considerable distance from the water, was observed to spring up suddenly, and after giving a loud and affecting howl, leaped over some high pales, and ran away with the utmost speed of which it was capable. The actions of the animal surprized the spectators, and they had scarcely ceased to become the subjects of some strange sensations, when they saw Ralph running towards the house, and heard him crying out, "Billy is drowned! Billy is drowned!" They hastened instantly to the place; but before they had reached it, the dog had plunged into the water, and diving to the bottom, caught the boy by the head, and with equal gentleness and fidelity brought him safely to land. On the boy recovering, he told his friends, that while he was under water, he felt something coming towards him, and laid hold of it; but supposing it was his brother, and being afraid they should both be drowned, he ungrasped his hand,—and this

was it, apparently, which afforded the dog an opportunity of bringing him out of the water. This is one of those cases, which must either be rejected as altogether unworthy of credit, or must be admitted as a special providence; and there is no possible escape from the former, in the present instance, from the credibility of the witnesses.*

The next remove of the family was to Calveley, in the parish of Bunbury; and it was while here, that the three brothers contracted an intimacy with Mr. Richard Cawley, who was afterwards united in marriage to Jane, their second sister. The last remove was to a farm in Alpraham, which Mr. Sim purchased in 1741. A note in the hand-writing of Mr. Cawley, shews that he was in the habit of taking religious counsel with Messrs. John, William, and Ralph Sim, as early as 1742.

William Sim, whose escape was so remarkable, and who was properly impressed with it, was religiously disposed from his youth, though he did not enter into the full enjoyment of gospel blessings till he became acquainted with the Methodists. He possessed considerable strength of mind, with great meekness and placidity, uniting, in no ordinary degree, the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove. His authority over his household was as firm, and yet tender, as his demeanour before them was exemplary. In circumstances the most trying, he was never detected out of temper,—no mean evidence, by the way, of that “perfect love” of which he was the professed recipient. He connected with diligence in business, fervour of spirit, and maintained, while engaged in the world, communion with his God. On returning from the secular transactions of the day, he was not unfrequently found seated in the house in a state of perfect abstraction, insensible apparently of the servants or others who might be engaged in domestic duties, and then, after an interval of silence, would suddenly burst into song, as though heaven had come down to earth, mingling his vespers with the notes of the blessed. Richard Jackson,† now hoary in the ways of God, bears a noble testimony to the character of his old master, having gone in and out before him as a servant, the greater part of his active life: and servants, in giving unsolicited evidence, are generally more to be depended upon than relatives or professed friends. As the work of God continued to spread, labourers were demanded; and it was not long before Mr. William Sim was ap-

* Meth. Mag. 1795, p. 355.

† Brother of the late Rev. Daniel Jackson, long a Preacher in the Wesleyan Connection.

appointed to meet a class at Tiverton, about two miles from Alpraham, which he continued to lead, till compelled by the infirmities of declining years to relinquish his charge. He was always the friend of the poor, and liberal in the support of the cause which he espoused. Few men stood higher in the opinion and affection of Mr. Wesley. He was never married. He died as he had lived, in happy fellowship with God, April 1788.

Of Mr. Ralph Sim, who also lived in a state of celibacy, and who was remarkably distinguished for simplicity of manners, it might be said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." He finished his religious course in peace, June, 1792.—Mr. John Sim was no less distinguished for christian integrity than his brothers.—Miss Mary, the eldest sister, who was never married, and who, as she manifested a preference to it, obtained in after-life the title of Dame Sim, continued to the close of her pilgrimage a meek, uniform follower of her Divine Saviour. She died March, 1783, in the 78th year of her age.

After the removal of the preaching to Mr. Sim's, it continued there, with the exception of one summer, when the house was rebuilding, till Christmas 1823, when a place was taken for a Sunday School in the neighbourhood, by Mr. Hitchen,* to which place it was deemed advisable to remove the congregation.

Alpraham being now regularly supplied with preaching, as far as the number of labourers would admit, and affording a comfortable home for the Preachers, opportunities were furnished for visiting the adjacent places. Thus Chelmondston or Pool, Rushton, Duddon Heath, and Tarporley were successively visited and received the Preachers. At the latter place, about two miles and a half from Alpraham, a commodious chapel was erected by subscription in 1791; and another was erected at Bunbury, in 1806.

Tattenhall was another of those early scenes of itinerant exertion; which amply remunerated the Preachers for the toil they bestowed; and Mr. Samuel Smith, who resided there on an estate of his own, was among the first-fruits. He was brought into early contact with the Methodists, through his marriage with Miss Elizabeth Sim; but his towering spirit disdained to stoop to the humiliations and exactions of Christianity, till, by associating with gay com-

* Grandson of Mr. Samuel Smith, of Tattenhall, who married Miss Elizabeth, sister of Messrs. John, William, and Ralph Sim.

pany, which involved him in heavy expences, he suffered a partial embarrassment in his temporal affairs. His prejudices acquired strength, not only from the native enmity of the human heart, but from a persuasion that the Preachers were the "False Prophets" spoken of in Scripture. He was at length induced to hear for himself, and the very first sermon proved the power of God to his salvation. He sought the Lord with strong cries and tears, received the remission of sins, united himself to the followers of Mr. Wesley, and became a successful and acceptable Local Preacher. Though he preached in most of the places round his own residence, to an extent of several miles, he did not confine himself to them, but visited distant parts. Having had two sons educated at Kingswood School, he was occasionally led thither, and preached in the neighbourhood with great success. In one of his excursions, he met with the Earl of Dartmouth, who was so enamoured with him, as to press him to seek and accept of ordination, promising in the event of his succeeding, to present him with a benefice. But no offers, however inviting, could ever allure him from the people among whom he had been called, and among whom he spent the remainder of his days. In evidence of the Earl's good feeling towards the father, one of the sons, yet living in Thames-street, London, obtained a situation under government through his influence.

As Mr. Smith was riding one day in company with Mr. Richard Gardner, of Tattenhall-Wood, the recent appearance of the Methodists became, among other topics, a subject of conversation. After a lengthened discussion upon the nature of true religion, and especially of an experimental knowledge of it in the heart, Mr. Smith observed, with great solemnity, and with a visible concern at the spiritual darkness and danger of his companion; "Mr. Gardner, you are blind!" "Nay," replied he, "I can see as well as you Mr. Smith!" The expression, however, was deeply impressed upon his heart. On his return home, he related to his wife the conversation which had passed; and from that time they both became seriously alarmed at their moral condition, and began with earnestness to inquire, what they must do to be saved? They were not at a loss where to seek that further help which their wants enforced; but, as they had been a considerable time on terms of intimacy with the Clergymen of the parish, who was vehemently opposed to the Methodists, they were prevented from attending their preaching, and from associating with them, through an unwillingness

to incur his displeasure. It was not long after this time that Mr. Gardner was taken ill of a fever, of which he died. During his illness he said to his wife; "If the Lord be pleased to raise me, from this sick bed, I will most certainly hear this despised and persecuted people for myself." But though he was not spared, his relatives had ground of hope, that he obtained repentance unto life. After his decease, his widow came to a determination, by the grace of God, to follow out the dying resolution of her husband. She accordingly began diligently to attend the preaching of the word by the Methodists, and took her children and her servants with her, that they also might hear the word of life. She soon received the truth, entertained the preachers in her house, and had the satisfaction of seeing all her children brought under the influence of true religion, and united in christian fellowship, in the same Society with herself. One of her children, Miss Elizabeth Gardner, was afterwards married to Mr. Williams, in whose children's children Methodism appears almost to have been hereditary; among whom may be noticed, Mrs. Morley, the late Mrs. Warren, Mrs. Roberts, Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Downes, of Manchester, and Mrs. A. Bealey, of Radcliffe Close,—the husbands of the three first ladies being Travelling Preachers.

Mr. Smith, who had been the instrumental cause of leading the female side of the house to connect themselves with Methodism, was also remotely useful to Mr. Williams. While the latter was yet a boy, his inquiries after true religion seem to have been considerably promoted by the following incident. Being one day in a smith's shop at Tattenhall, one of the neighbours asked him in a jeering manner, whether his father now went to pray dark prayers with Dr. Smith? This Dr. Smith, was Mr. Samuel Smith, the local preacher, whom Mr. Bruce, the neighbour in question, affected to despise for want of a classical education. The expression "dark prayers" excited his curiosity. On passing a cock-pit one day, he observed a great concourse of people surrounding it upon their knees, shouting forth their oaths and curses. Surely, thought he, *this* must be what Mr. Bruce meant by praying dark prayers. His father, by this circumstance, was furnished with an occasion of teaching him a lesson upon the subject of praying in the Holy Ghost, which he never forgot. Nor is it unworthy of recording, that much as Mr. Bruce had expressed his contempt of the religious labours of Mr. Smith, God was pleased to employ that very person as the instrument of his

conversion. For, on one occasion, when it was expected that Mr. Wesley was to preach in the neighbourhood, the brother of Mr. Bruce, who was a clergyman of the Church of England, prevailed upon him to go and hear for himself. He accordingly went, but instead of Mr. Wesley, who had been unavoidably prevented attending, Mr. Smith, the man he so much despised, was supplying his place. So powerfully, however, was his attention arrested by the sacred truths he delivered, and such was the conviction with which the Holy Spirit accompanied them to his heart, that from that very hour he earnestly sought salvation; nor was it long before he obtained a scriptural sense of peace with God, and became a most decided and useful christian.*

Mr. Williams, who could give his boy a lecture on praying in the Holy Ghost, was one of those who prayed in the Spirit himself. He had been previously among the Presbyterians, and it was with extreme caution that he first ventured to hear the Methodists. Being, however, tolerably conversant with the word of God, and accustomed to hear the truth as taught by others, he deemed himself competent to detect any material errors in the doctrine of the new sect; and judged it unmanly to entertain a prejudice against them, without a fair hearing; especially, when he adverted to the ignorance and irreligion of those who were the most forward to condemn, and the readiest to persecute. The more he attended to the truths they delivered, and the more carefully he examined the sacred oracles to which they appealed, the deeper was his conviction of the accuracy of the doctrines they taught, and the necessity of an experimental knowledge of them. From a dubious and suspicious hearer, he became a steady adherent, and ready advocate of those, whom popular clamour had denominated the false prophets; and, regardless of the odium he might incur, he was among the first in Cheshire, to give his name as a member of the Methodist Society, and continued to be such to the end of life. So eager was he to avail himself of opportunities of religious improvement, that he frequently, after a hard day's labour, travelled fifteen or twenty miles to hear a sermon.

Another character who began to attend the Methodist ministry about this time, was Mr. James Bayley. The first preacher he heard, was John Nelson. In every place where preaching was established, for several miles round the neighbourhood in which he lived, he was sure to be present at the

* Memoirs and select Letters of Mrs. Anne Warren, p. 8, 21.

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Another character who began to attend the Methodist ministry about this time, was Mr. James Bayley. The first preacher he heard, was John Nelson. In every place where preaching was established, for several miles round the neighbourhood in which he lived, he was sure to be present at the

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hour appointed. No weather deterred him; in the storm—in sunshine—in the street, the barn, the house—beneath the umbrageous foliage of a tree—surrounded by the mob—still he was there, to take his stand by the preacher, or to occupy a seat among the hearers. Even in his boyhood, and before he became a member of Society, such was the strength of his attachment to the Methodists, that, to employ his own language, he “Was ready to fight for them.” He was not prompt in taking the *lead* in religious exercises, but he was always ready to *follow* such as he deemed more qualified for the work than himself; and few excelled him in attempts to enlarge the Church of Christ, by personal applications to the vicious and the careless—pressing, importunately pressing them to attend a place of worship, and to give the utmost diligence to make their calling and election sure. He was in this, if not like the sun travelling in the greatness of his strength, or the moon in her brightness, a fair representation of the Star of Bethlehem, directing the inquirer and the stranger to the Saviour; himself going “before them,” and never pausing for any length of time, “till *he* came and stood over where the young child was;” when the persons thus conducted, have been known not only to have “worshipped” and “opened their treasures,” but to have “presented” to the Lord what is infinitely more valuable than “gold, and frankincense, and myrrh”—the sacrifice of a “broken and a contrite heart,”—and once accepted, have “rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” Here it was, that he pre-eminently took the lead, however he might follow in public praise and prayer; and whenever he succeeded in bringing a profligate sinner under the sound of the word, or a stray sheep into the fold, he returned home like the conqueror exulting in the triumphs of the field.—He was a genuine lover of his king, regular in the discharge of religious duties, equitable in all his dealings with his fellow-creatures, faithful as a friend, and affectionate in all the social relations of life. Such was the rheumatic affliction with which he was visited, that he was unable to support himself or go abroad for several years, without the aid of crutches. When enquiries were made respecting his health, his answer was frequently, “Full of pain, but the Lord enables me to bear it.” A few days before his dissolution, he again replied to the interrogation of a friend, “Full of pain—but not far from home—not far from Mount Sion.” He died January 23rd, 1827.

The manner in which James Bayley laid himself out

for the good of his neighbours, is worthy of imitation. It is one of those modes of christian usefulness, which takes its rise in the love of God, which seeks for indulgence in the good of man, and which requires a very moderate share of talent for its attainment. A person may in this way exercise his one talent, if not as splendidly, in many instances as usefully, as some ministers in the pulpit, much more highly gifted; and the same spirit that would cease to encourage, or attempt to repress efforts of usefulness in this way, would either seek to extinguish, or pass unheeded the beautiful emerald light of the glow-worm, beaming like a star of earth through the darkness of the night, because it did not equal the meridian splendour of the sun. The orb of day is only expected to communicate the light of which it is possessed, and the glow-worm is called to display no more. It is with christian ministers as it is with some large commercial houses in the metropolis; they commence on the wholesale plan, and may, under God, push their usefulness to almost any extent: but while the small retail-dealer is dependant upon these larger houses, they are also, to a certain extent, dependant upon him; and at no time is he prevented from transacting business with them according to the extent of his capital. The private christian too, whose abilities may be slender, and whose efforts may be narrowed by circumstances, may nevertheless be of essential service to the public ministry, and, in process of time, by successive efforts upon the individual, may realize an ample sum of good to man, nor less to himself, when he shall deliver up his one talent with usury, and when his Lord shall say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." It is lamentable to find christians acting, as though the conversion of sinners was a work sacred only to the public ministry; without ever once imagining, that on a more confined scale, a tremendous responsibility rests with themselves.

If the Saviour of the world, who went throughout all the cities and villages of Judea, that he might gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad, has left his followers an example that they should tread in his steps; and if he enforces his example by what amounts to a positive precept, declaring, "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad;" it must place those persons in as perilous a situation, who observe a neutrality in *usefulness*, as those who are neuter in *piety*. The *travels* of the Redeemer may be made to chime in with *itinerancy*, and may be considered

as not at all operating on those who are located by circumstances; but still, that localization, which providence itself has in all probability imposed, exonerates no one from the *object* of these travels—that of *gathering* souls into the Church of God. Had our Lord been addressing the Apostles in the words cited, both the *wanderings* and the *duty*, by way of personal convenience, might have been laid upon them: but he was addressing the *people* and the *pharisees*, which attaches a universality to the cautionary remarks, that will admit of no such restriction. “He”—no matter who, whether public teacher or private christian,—“*He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.*” If all the private members of the Methodist Society were as solicitous to *gather* with Christ as was James Bayley, instances of half occupied chapels and empty pews would be still more rare than they are.

The characters who have turned up in the course of inquiry, are only a few among the many that were brought to God in Cheshire, during the infancy of the work. Much is implied in Mr. Hopper’s words, in reference to his own visit, “God begun a good work *then*, which has increased and continued to this day.” This “good work” is still more circumstantially described in the Memoirs already noticed, as “A remarkable revival of religion, chiefly among young people,” when “many united themselves to the Methodist Society.”

Up to the close of 1749, it will be found in glancing over the scene which comes within the range of these pages, that in Lancashire and Cheshire in particular, several large towns remained unvisited by a Methodist Preacher; and that *places* as unimportant in history as they were insignificant in size and in population, generally received their first attention and their most zealous efforts. The truth is, neither Mr. Wesley nor the persons who acted under him, had any preconceived plan upon which to proceed, and professing to follow alone the openings of *providence*, they only—at least in a general way, entered into those doors, which the Divine Being, through the intervention of human agents, seemed to open: and as “The pillar of fire, and of the cloud,” led them in the way of the wilderness rather than that of the thickly populated city, thither they at first went, and there they remained till they were conducted to things higher.

Most of the *people* who received the Preachers, were *poor*; and the religion of Jesus, pent up in such mean abodes, seemed something like the sun through a dusky sky, assuming but

little of its native magnificence and splendour to mere eyes of flesh and blood. There were a few exceptions, but the bulk of them were at the utmost remove from affluent circumstances.

In attestation of the general poverty of the people, there was not, in the whole extent of country which this work professes to embrace, a single building erected by any Society, with a view to its sole appropriation as a *place of public worship*. The *Era* of "PREACHING HOUSES," as chapels were formerly called, did not commence in this part of the country till 1750; and therefore it is, that the first part of this work terminates with the close of the present year, as comprizing, in all the preceding periods, what may be emphatically denominated the *Era* of GARRETS and CELLARS; not that these were never afterwards resorted to, but because there was scarcely any other place,—except a barn, venerable for its age, which was capable of affording a contrast, and of which they could boast.

The men who had brought the work to its present state of prosperity and perfection, were for the most part *illiterate*, and among that class of people whom philosophers generally affect to despise. Thus whether we view places or persons, we are compelled to *stoop*, and in stooping, to bend the eye upon littlenesses: and yet these are evidences of the omnipotence of the work.

If man were left to himself, he would seek only to glitter in the city,—consider himself called upon, and so prepare accordingly, to prophecy to the wealthy,—instantly raise the stupendous fane to heaven,—and encircle himself with only the literati of the day. It is not thus, that the Supreme Being works. In creation, he commenced with inanimate matter, and advanced till he rose to his own image, in the sacred form of Man. In the institution of divine worship, he proceeded from the altar of turf in the open air to the tabernacle, and from the tabernacle to the temple. In conferring his blessings, he did not in the first instance distinguish a nation, but visited the individual—Abraham, from whom a nation was to proceed. If a selection was to be made, for men to preach the gospel, persons in obscure life were to be chosen. The persons to whom that gospel was first to be preached, were the poor;—the prophets in Herod's court, the saints in Cæsar's household, and the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia were to move on in the rear. There is an emphasis in these words, "from the *least*, even unto the *greatest*," which can only be properly felt,

when viewed in connexion with the other works of God—works which, while they *humble*, are calculated to *exalt*. The Divine Being discovers in a thousand ways, that his general plan is to *work upward*; and Methodism bears at least the divine character of beginning at the right end; and from this period, and onward, it will be perceived to be rising by certain progressive steps towards perfection, in the number, knowledge, piety, and usefulness of its disciples. But that for which *Methodism* was especially distinguished, as will be seen from all that precedes, and for which it has ever been distinguished, is, its peremptorily insisting on the necessity of not only a reformation of manners, but of the Conversion of the heart to God. The doctrine of the NEW BIRTH was as conspicuous on its form and as legible in its character, as the sign board of the tradesman, in the front of his building, to the gaze of the public.

“YE SEE YOUR CALLING, BRETHREN, HOW THAT NOT MANY WISE MEN AFTER THE FLESH, NOT MANY MIGHTY, NOT MANY NOBLE, ARE CALLED. BUT GOD HATH CHOSEN THE FOOLISH THINGS OF THE WORLD, TO CONFOUND THE WISE; AND GOD HATH CHOSEN THE WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD, TO CONFOUND THE THINGS WHICH ARE MIGHTY; AND BASE THINGS OF THE WORLD, AND THINGS WHICH ARE DESPISED, HATH GOD CHOSEN, YEA, AND THINGS WHICH ARE NOT, TO BRING TO NOUGHT THINGS THAT ARE; THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE.”

END OF PART FIRST.

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— 28 }

— 29 }
to } Do. of 1744.
— 32 }

— 20 — 15, 17 for Sims and Hitchens, read Sim and Hitchen.

— 30 — 5 for had, read has.

— 33 — 39 insert of, after loan.

— 40 — 36 for principal, read principle.

— 42 — 12 for persevering, read preserving.

— 47 — 22 for Longbridge, read Longridge.

— 128 — 20 for title, read tithe.

APPENDIX.

1743. PAGE 19.

WHAT was at most but problematical respecting Burkitt's Notes, when the passage was written, has since been rendered certain; for they were seen *in chains*, in Bunbury Church, by the Rev. William Smith, in the spring of the present year, 1827.

1749. PAGES 123-125.

During the progress of this part of the work through the press, the true state of the case between Mr. Charles Wesley and his brother John, in reference to Mrs. Grace Murray, has been communicated to the writer; and as the authority is indisputable, it is here presented to the reader. Mr. John Wesley wrote a letter to Mrs. Murray, but through some mishap forgot to direct it. Being put into the post-office, it was of course opened. On its being ascertained to be from Mr. Wesley, it was directed to him. Falling into the hand of Mr. Charles, who either did not observe the initial of the christian name, if it bore one, or had the privilege of opening his brother's letters, he broke the seal—read the contents—disapproved of the union—and immediately contrived to promote a union between Mrs. Murray and John Bennet. He urged on the marriage ceremony, and completed his purpose before he left Newcastle, and before his brother could possibly reach it. If Mr. Moore were acquainted with this, he was not without a reason for endeavouring to exculpate Mr. Charles, by employing the strong expression of "*corrupt motives*;" for it is only on the strength of the epithet that he can effect his escape. Many will go to the utmost length with Mr. M. in vindicating him against *corruption*, but few will exempt him from a rash, imprudent, meddling conduct in the affair. It was his place, if he disapproved of it, to have spoken to his brother, to have heard his reasons, and to have remonstrated with him. And for Mr. M. to defend Charles against the charge of "*corrupt motives*," when it was not so much his *motives* as his *conduct* that was called in question, is something like defending a man against murder, when he is only charged with defamation of character: consequently, however he may be acquitted of the one, the defence leaves the other untouched.

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